

SWITZERLAND AND THE ENGLISH

Other Works by ARNOLD LUNN

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SWITZERLAND AND THE ENGLISH

By
ARNOLD LUNN

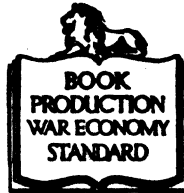


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CONTENTS

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION	I
 CHAPTER	
I SWITZERLAND	7
II GREEK, ROMAN AND HEBREW	14
III THE DISCOVERY OF MOUNTAIN BEAUTY	35
IV ENGLISHMEN IN SWITZERLAND (17TH AND 18TH CENTURIES)	49
V ANGLO-SWISS RELATIONS DURING AND AFTER THE FRENCH REVOLUTION	63
VI SWITZERLAND AND THE ROMANTIC MOVEMENT	73
VII RUSKIN AND THE ALPS	97
VIII THE BRITISH CONTRIBUTION TO MOUNTAINEERING	116
IX PORTRAIT OF A CLUB	128
X THE BRITISH CONTRIBUTION TO MOUNTAINEERING LITERATURE	165
XI THE ENGLISHMAN IN THE WINTER ALPS	178
XII BRITISH SKI-ING AND SKI-MOUNTAINEERING	201
XIII "DOWNHILL ONLY"	209
XIV SWITZERLAND AND THE SWISS	230
REFERENCES	236
NOTES AND TRANSLATIONS	239

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

OCTOBER SNOWS	<i>Frontispiece</i>
	<i>Facing page</i>
GRINDELWALD	70
SOURCE OF THE AVIRON	71
MEIRINGEN VALLEY (HASLI THAL)	86
MER DE GLACE	87
MATTERHORN	102
LAKE GENEVA	103
"CONSULTING MURRAY." ASCENT OF THE WETTERHORN	118
DAVOS RINK. SWISS HONEYMOON	119
UNTERAAR GLACIER	166
DENT DU MIDI FROM LEYSIN	167
THE WETTERHORN FROM ROSENLAUI.	182
THE BERNESE OBERLAND FROM ABOVE BERN	183
PASS OF FAIDO	214
HARE TRACKS	215
"DOWNHILL ONLY"	230
EASTERTIDE IN THE ALPS	231

DEDICATORY LETTER

TO

PETER AND ANTOINETTE

My Dear Peter,

We said good-bye to each other at Malta a few weeks before the opening of the siege and I have just been reading the story of your first leave in four years, a week's ski-ing on Ætna. "I am the son," you write, "and the grandson of travel agents. As a result I have travelled widely and have lived in many countries, but there is no part of the world which I can describe as home. I am a native nowhere except among the snows. Wherever I ski I feel that sense of happy ease, which people describe as 'being at home.' That is why those days on Ætna were for me like some brief but refreshing return from exile."

I cannot subscribe to the doctrine ubi nix ibi patria. Since we met I have skied in the Rockies, the Yosemite and the Andes, but exile is still exile even among the mountains, and I can only echo your confession, "I am a native nowhere except among the snows" if I add the operative words "of Switzerland." And I know that you would accept this amendment for there is certainly one part of the world which you can "describe as home," the Bernese Oberland. It was at Mürren that you began to ski before your second birthday, and it was to Grindelwald, my home as a child, that you returned every summer. During a recent visit to Harrow, I disgraced myself by murmuring to a friend "that wall seems rather familiar", as indeed it was, for it was the wall round our old home, but there is not a turn on the old mule path which leads from Grindelwald past Hertenbühl, and Waldspitz, Mühlebach and Bachsee to the Faulhorn which you and I cannot recall, and there is not a snowslope on Schiltgrat or Scheidegg which we cannot translate into the dynamic memory of Schuss and Christiania. And neither you nor I could walk down the street at Mürren or Grindelwald without meeting friends with whom we had played as children, or with whom we had climbed or skied in youth or manhood. "They use no phrases of friendship," said Ruskin of the Swiss, "but they do not fail you at your need." Yes, it is not only because we love the Swiss mountains that we are conscious in Switzerland of "that sense of happy ease which people describe as 'being at home.'" And then there is the tie of language. When you were a small boy your Mother who was on the point of returning to Switzerland from England informed me by telegram that your Nanny had just left and that I was to look out for a Swiss Nanny. I asked a clergyman from Bern whether he could recommend a Nanny who could teach you ski-ing and Bernese-German.

"Und der Character?" he asked, and seemed faintly disquieted by my reply. "Of course if she's got a good character as well as a good ski-ing style, so much the better, but first things first," and as you know I was able to meet you and your Mother on arrival with the new Nanny, woman ski-champion of Grindelwald. She taught you to telemark, and she initiated you into that dialect which is the key to a freemasonry, to which those who only know high German are seldom admitted. "I remember," you write, "how once in Malta, the Swiss Nanny of some friends of mine walked into the room. When I was introduced I spoke in Swiss German. A look of startled happiness came over her face, and Malta faded away as we talked in that lovely dialect about the mountains."

"Lovely?" Aber me het ihm agseh das öppis anders ihm dä Ougeblick z'danke gö het. Not "lovely," perhaps, but beloved, for what memories are evoked by the dialect which you and I learned to speak as children! I remember meeting two Swiss in a Berlin street, and the few words which they spoke in passing conjured up a sudden vision of the mountain matrix in which this granite speech was shaped. The tumult of mountain torrents has passed into this language, and the sonorous clang of cowbells and the strong winds of freedom which thundered through the pass of Morgarten. It is not a pretty dialect but it is the virile language of freemen. The rough "r's" would have softened into a more servile intonation had the Swiss succumbed to the Habsburg, the Burgundian or the Corsican.

You loved the mountains long before you began to race down them. That poignant nostalgia for Switzerland from which, as I have good reason to know, skiers in general and ski-racers in particular are suffering in these years of exile is the reflection of something far deeper than the mere longing for the physical thrill of high-speed ski-ing. In the mosaic of emotions evoked by such words as FIS, Arlberg-Kandahar or Parsenn Derby love of mountains, however inarticulate or indefinite, has a very definite place.

The attitude to ski-racing of certain mountaineers, quoted in the penultimate chapter of this book, reminds me of Ruskin's attitude to the Baroque. Ruskin loved Byzantine and Gothic Venice as passionately as the mountaineers loved the great peaks, but he believed that Baroque was not only ugly but evil, the expression of infidelity and pride. Mutatis mutandis ski-racing is baroque to the mountaineer. The ski-racer is not only a vandal, but a blasphemous vandal. But just as Venice means far more to the man who loves not only Byzantine St. Mark's and the Gothic Ducal Palace but also the Baroque Salute, so the mountains mean more to those who have not only climbed but skied. Ski-ing and ski-racing enlarge the range of our mountain sympathies, and introduce romance into these lower ranges which the mountaineer relegates

to the category of mere training walks. What was the Schiltgrat before it became the most famous racing course in the world? Nothing but the grassy buttress of an obscure summit. To the old guard of British racers Martha's Meadow, "Kandahar Finish," Mac's Leap and the Devil's Gap are as evocative of romantic memories as Carrel's Corridor or Mummery's Crack to mountaineers. Romance begins for the mountaineer when he crosses the snowline or ropes up for the rocks, but to the skier "there is neither hill nor hillocke which doth not containe in it some most sweete memorie of worthie matters." There is scarcely a peak visible from Mürren which I have not climbed, and in the hierarchy of mountain memories, the great peaks and glacier passes have pride of place, but the Bernese Oberland would not mean to me all that it does mean if no afterglow from the golden age of British ski-ing lingered on the snows of Mürren, Wengen and Grindelwald.

There is, for instance, a little corner on the mulepath between Mürren and Gimmelwald which has associations as dear to me as those of Concordia or Wetterkessel. It is the corner from which I refereed the World Championship of 1935. The glass had sunk to an all-time low, but a violent hurricane hunted the snow-charged clouds from the peaks, and I knew that until the wind dropped, the snow would not begin to fall. We had worked for weeks to perfect the organisation of the championship and for the first time Norway was represented by a full team in these heretical British races, downhill and slalom. It was not only the competition between individual racers which was decided that day but also the competition between the elements and the organisers. I kept one eye on the streamers of grey cloud ravelling out into a damp dispirited sky, and the other eye on my wrist watch. You had drawn a low number, and the wind which kept the snow at bay began to drop just before you were due to start. Two crack racers failed to appear, and rumours of broken legs floated down the course. Kleisle who had drawn the number just before you swung past, and the low music of the valley river blended with the syncopated clatter of his ski and the rasp of his steel edges, and the seconds began to drag . . . and then suddenly a distant cheer writes finis to my suspense, a cheer which grew in volume till you swept past to finish within fifteen seconds of the world champion. And just after the last competitor had passed the posts, a blinding snowstorm broke.

Shall we ever compete again in World ski championships? I wonder. Those who should have been our young entry have never left these islands since the war began. But even if we vanish from the field of competitive ski-ing, we have left behind a legend which will not easily die. You played a great part in building up the prestige of British ski-ing from the day when, as a small boy of sixteen, you blinked your way through a snowstorm in which

so many of the cracks came to grief. I was grateful to you for your consistent record of success but still more grateful for all you did, as a member of eight and captain of five British ski teams to build up a tradition more precious than victory.

Give my love to Antoinette. More than one of your brother officers and colleagues, returned from Malta, have spoken with the warmest admiration of her stoic courage and genius for improvisation during the most difficult days of that heroic siege. Walter Amstutz wrote to a dear, dear friend in Italy when the second of your three Malta-born babies arrived, and she replied with her customary contempt for the feelings of the Italian censor. "The English are the only sound argument for the existence of a Herrenvolk. Fancy Peter placidly continuing to replenish the stock of Lunns in the intervals of being bombed at Malta."

If the "cease-fire" has not sounded in Europe before this book reaches you, I hope that you will be serving on some part of the Front near our beloved Alps.

Your affectionate father,

ARNOLD LUNN.

June 5th, 1944.

Postscript. September 20th. Antoinette, who has just arrived with the children, thinks that my friend, from whose letter I quoted, should not have given you the sole credit for replenishing the stock of Lunns.

She tells me that you succeeded, last June, in your efforts to be transferred from a staff job to one of the more adventurous of the modern branches of the Fighting Services . . . and once again my mind travels back to the little corner on the mule path between Mürren and Gimmelwald, the corner where I waited, hoping and praying that you would finish safely before the storm broke. . . .

INTRODUCTION

NO historian seems to have commented on, much less attempted to explain, the unique character of Anglo-Swiss relations. Switzerland is the only European country which has never fought either as our ally or as our enemy, and with whom our relations have never been embittered by enmity, poisoned by alliance, or undermined by economic rivalry. This absence of friction cannot be explained by lack of contact, for the relations between England and the Protestant Cantons were close and cordial, from the Reformation onwards, and in more recent times the decisive intervention of Great Britain enabled the Swiss, both in 1848 and 1857, to maintain their independence against the threat of foreign intervention. The influence of the British envoy in the creation of the Swiss Federal Army is discussed in Chapter V.

The special character of our relations with the Swiss is, however, due neither to religious, political nor economic causes, but to the influence which the British have exercised in the discovery of the cultural, æsthetic and sporting possibilities of the mountain ranges of Switzerland. "Touring in Switzerland and the Alps," writes G. R. de Beer, "may be said to have begun in the sixties of the eighteenth century, when the Treaty of Paris had put an end to the Seven Years' War, and the way to the Continent was open to Britons. They lost no time in finding it, and Wäber states that of twenty guests in a Swiss inn at this period it was usual to find that fourteen were British."

None of those who visited Switzerland in the eighteenth and nineteenth century made a more notable contribution than the British to mountain art and mountain literature. The poets of the Romantic movement and the greatest of all mountain prophets, John Ruskin, were perhaps the chief architects of the mountain cult. The British who were among the first to insist that mountains were beautiful were, if not the first to invent, at least the first to organise and popularise the sport of mountaineering. The Alpine Club is the parent of all mountaineering clubs. Again our influence on the development of winter sports was of great importance particularly, as we shall see, in the sphere of competitive ski-ing. It was the initiative of English winter sportsmen which was largely responsible for the creation of the Cresta run, and again for the

introduction of Bandy to Switzerland. At a later stage the influence of Canada proved decisive in the growing popularity of ice-hockey. Curling is to-day as popular among the Swiss as in Scotland, the country of its origin.

No historian and no critic of the contemporary theme has done justice to the fact that the English, who have to travel five hundred miles to find high mountains and good ski-ing country, should have played so great a role in the development of sports which are native to Switzerland. Essays and booklets on the English genius stream from our propaganda departments in time of war, and the fact that England has invented most of the games which other countries have since adopted is not overlooked, but the more surprising fact that we have revolutionised sports which are not native to England is virtually ignored.

Sport has to mature like old brandy before the academic historian will condescend to notice its existence. The Olympic Games and the fierce rivalries of the Byzantine circus are recognised themes for learned disquisition, an occasional chaste reference to cricket sometimes creeps into the works of English historians, and mountaineering, in so far as it comes under the heading of exploration, is not entirely ignored, but the social significance of sport as a mirror of life is appreciated by comparatively few writers. I do not, of course, suggest that a general historian should burden his pages with accounts of particular sporting events or with lists of world champions, for few things are more ephemeral than athletic fame, but it is inconsequent to write learned theses on the religious, social, cultural, and artistic significance of the classic Olympic Games, and yet to ignore the corresponding aspects of modern sport. Few institutions, for instance, reflected more faithfully the Victorian ethos than the Alpine Club in its early days, and few things mirrored more accurately than ski-ing the ideological battles of the modern world in between the two wars.

The reader may be ready to accept the general principle that the discovery of mountain beauty and the beginnings of mountaineering, and the special character of the Alpine Club reflect contemporary trends in religious and social philosophy, and yet quarrel with my particular interpretation of this general principle, but my object will be attained if Chapters II, III and VIII of this book provoke further discussion of the revolutions in taste which are responsible for the modern attitude to mountains.

Three minor points call for passing comment. It seems inconsistent to drop the prefix "Mr." in the case of, say, Wordsworth and Ruskin, and to retain it in the case of modern writers such as G. W. Young and Frank Smythe. I have therefore only retained prefixes which are informative. "Mr." which can be taken for granted is not informative—and even in the case of prefixes, which indicate rank or status, I confined myself to using them on the first mention of the person concerned. Scientists never use prefixes in quotations from the writings of other scientists, and I have often wished that this useful convention could be adopted by historians and literary critics.

Even in these days of paper economy the appearance of a page should count for something. Footnotes and reference numerals disfigure a page, and are irritating to the reader. They are also unnecessary. It is possible to identify a reference by the method I have adopted in this book, where the references are all given at the end of the volume. Footnotes may be divided into two classes, those which need not be read at the same time as the text to which they refer and which can therefore be relegated, as I have relegated them, to the end of the volume, and footnotes which must be read concurrently with the text to which they refer. I cannot discover any adequate reason for failing to incorporate such footnotes in the text itself. It is strange that authors who take trouble over their style, and who would hastily correct, in typescript or proof, any jerky interruption to the flow of a paragraph, will yet tolerate the impediment of a footnote which interrupts the reader, deflects his eye to the bottom of the page and then compels him to waste time finding the original place in the text. The pages of this book are not littered up with footnotes or reference numerals, but I hope that the reader will not disregard the notes at the end of the volume. This book is written for the general reader, and points of specialist interest are therefore consigned to the notes. Translations of quotations which are not translated in the text are translated in the notes.

I apologise to Scottish readers for the title of this book. I seldom write a book without being admonished by friendly correspondents North of the Border for using the word "English" where "British" would be more accurate, but surely the choice of "English" or "British" must often depend on literary considerations. "British" is clearly correct in an official context, such as "The British Army,"

"The British team" or "*The British Ski Year Book*," but in other contexts it has often a comical or ironic flavour. We talk, as Dr. Fowler remarks in *The King's English*, of the British Matron and the British working man, but of an English gentleman and of the English Bible. Though King James I was a Scot the King James version is never referred to as the British Bible. And "Briton" is frankly impossible save in humorous contexts. The Clarendon Press published a series of anthologies under the titles *The Englishman in Italy*, *The Englishman in Greece* and *The Englishman in the Alps*. Some of our purists might contend that *The Briton in the Alps* would have been a more suitable title.

If therefore I sometimes use English in these chapters where "British" would be more correct, I hope that I shall not be accused of any disparagement of Scottish contributions to our sport.

I am glad to be able to subpoena in my defence a distinguished Scottish author, whose book, *The Endless Adventure*, is well known to all students of the eighteenth century.

"The word 'British' we tolerate," writes Mr. F. S. Oliver, "as a convenient term of denotation; but it lacks both bouquet and after-taste. One can love or hate England but not so easily Britain. It was England not Britain that the Germans prayed God to strafe. Let us be candid; neither Britain nor British has any magic in it. Their thin sound is without power to touch our imagination through the ear; while their tradition is all too recent to have wound itself round our hearts. England and Scotland on the other hand are words of great beauty though the first is the more melodious of the two. The traditions of both are rich and potent. . . . Since the time when King James VI incorporated South Britain with his ancestral domains there has been a growing tendency on both sides of the Border to let the part—the larger part—speak for the whole, and to speak of England and English. . . . Since Britain is a poor word and as there is no precedent that I know of for using Scotland to include the whole island I see no good reason for fighting against a tendency to which even the greatest Scottish writers have yielded. Nine times out of ten the words 'England' and 'English' come more gratefully to my tongue than 'Britain' or 'British.' . . . The notion that any subordination or abatement of national pretensions is implied in the use of 'England' or 'English' to denote the great incorporating union and the things appertaining thereto must provoke a smile on the face

of anyone who knows his fellow countrymen on both sides of the Border."

I am deeply grateful to all those who have helped me, to Miss Phyllis Holt-Needham, Lt.-Col. B. W. Bowdler, C.M.G., D.S.O., and to Lt.-Col. G. R. de Beer, F.R.S., who have read the proofs and helped with many valuable suggestions. I am greatly indebted to Professor Gilbert Murray, O.M., Professor A. W. Pickard, Cambridge, Monsignor R. A. Knox, and Father Bruno James who read Chapter II in proof. I never fail to profit by submitting controversial writings in proof to those critics who are most likely to disagree with my conclusions. Sometimes I have radically revised my conclusions as the result of this practice, but in this case the only changes of importance are those in which I have tried to meet the criticisms of these distinguished scholars, as for instance Professor Gilbert Murray's deductions from the tendency of the Greeks to associate legends with prominent landmarks. I have quoted Monsignor Knox's comments in the notes at the end of this book. I hope I may claim him as a supporter of my Hellenic heresies.

I must also record my indebtedness to Sir Claud Schuster, G.C.B., and Geoffrey Winthrop Young, ex-presidents of the Alpine Club, and H. E. G. Tyndale, Editor of the *Alpine Journal*, who read some of the later chapters in proof.

I am indebted to the Alpine Club for the loan of an engraving by Pars which is reproduced in this book, to Sir William Rothenstein for a photograph of one of the most interesting mountainscapes in modern art, and to Mr. A. P. Oppé for permission to reproduce a painting by Towne. I have also reproduced from a painting in my own possession, a masterpiece by Adrian Allinson.

I am also indebted to the Victoria and Albert Museum for the permission to reproduce the sketch by Cozens (Crown copyright reserved), to the British Museum for a water colour by Turner, and to Sir Eric Maclagan, C.B.E., Mr. Arthur Hind, O.B.E., and H. M. Hake, C.B.E., for help and advice in securing illustrations for this book, and in particular to Dr. Walter Amstutz of Zürich, who has provided the bulk of the Swiss illustrations. I am grateful for the good offices of the Swiss Legation and of Mr. V. P. Ceresole, of the Swiss Federal Railways, in the delivery of many of these illustrations across occupied Europe, and I am indebted to the Swiss photographers whose names are recorded in

connection with the beautiful specimens of their art which adorn these pages.

Finally, I should like to thank Miss Dorothy Cast, of Messrs. Eyre and Spottiswoode, for all she has done to expedite this book through the many bottle-necks which are inevitable in war-time production.

CHAPTER I

SWITZERLAND

MANY years ago Sir Martin Conway and I motored from the Mediterranean to Chamonix *via* the Dauphiné. Conway, who had climbed in the Alps, Andes, Himalaya and Spitzbergen, was an Art critic with a European reputation, and he looked at peaks and glaciers with the trained eye of a connoisseur of colour and form. I was curious to elicit his verdict on the Meije and the Ecrins, which he had never before seen excepting from distant ranges. "Very fine," said Sir Martin, "particularly for those who have seen nothing better, but not in the same class as the best things in the Alps." "Such as what?" I asked. "Such as Mont Blanc from the Brévent, the Matterhorn from the Riffel and the north wall of the Oberland from Mürren or the Faulhorn."

There are many domes and four-sided pyramids among the mountain ranges which Conway had explored, but the view of the Mont Blanc range from the Brévent and of the Matterhorn from the Riffel have been justly acclaimed as pre-eminent by generations of mountain lovers. It is, perhaps, the contrast between the Byzantine dome and the Gothic aiguilles which gives the view from the Brévent its special character. It is less easy to analyse the unique effect of the Matterhorn as seen from the Riffel, an effect which is, perhaps, partly due to delicate details, such as the suggestion of a breaking wave in the summit crest, the white sweep, like a bridal train, of the Stockje ice-slope, the lovely curve of the ridge which stoops from "the Shoulder," and "the Shoulder" itself, that subtle intrusion of snow into the massive complexities of rock.

The splendour and variety of the north wall of the Oberland is due to the felicitous interplay of crystalline and calcareous rock. Homogeneous ranges, carved from the same material, limestone ranges, for instance, run to standard types, and often suggest mass-production in their wearisome reiteration of stock designs. In the Oberland the ancient crystalline gneiss has been thrust over, or in some cases intruded between different layers of the younger calcareous rocks. The smooth limestone which rises in one tremendous vertical step from the floor of the Lauterbrunnen valley would be oppressive if the eye could not follow the cliff upwards to the splintered crystalline ridge which soars from the Jungfraujoch to the Jungfrau summit. The limestone serves as a pediment for an

experiment in baroque. The "frozen hurricanes" of the Jungfrau and the volutes of the Silberhorn recall Geoffrey Scott's interpretation of the motives which inspired the baroque architects. "They wished to communicate, through architecture, a sense of exultant vigour and overflowing strength. . . . To communicate this the baroque architects conceived of Movement, tossing and returning ; movement unrestrained, yet not destructive of that essential repose which comes from composition, nor exhaustive of that reserve of energy implied in masses, when, as here, they are truly and significantly massed." Architectural analogies seem inevitable in any attempt to convey the character of the Oberland. The Finsteraarhorn, for instance, is pure Gothic. There is a suggestion of flying buttresses in the Gernsbach and Büttlachen, of the basilica in the flat roof of the Mönch seen from the slopes of the Great Scheidegg, and of the Romanesque in the massive dignity of the Eiger. But all analogies fail in the case of the Wetterhorn, for the Wetterhorn is unique. There are domes which burlesque Mont Blanc, and pyramids which parody the Matterhorn, but, to quote Aristotle with due alteration, "the Wetterhorn may be honoured but not praised, for we praise things by reference to a standard, and the gods are beyond compare."

The Alpine lakes are as rich in contrasts as the Alpine mountains. Maggiore, for instance, is a masterpiece in the classical style. From the terraces of San Remigio, above Pallanza, one looks out on to a majestic sweep of unimpeded water towards the ordered sequence of hills that lean towards Lombardy. The classical architects understood the æsthetic value of empty spaces and did not overload their stone canvasses, and it is the classicist in Hilaire Belloc which finds expression in the cry of relief with which he greeted Maggiore after escaping from the Gothic defiles of the Gotthard. "The Alps spread out on either side like great arms welcoming the southern day ; the wholesome and familiar haze that should accompany summer dimmed the more distant mountains of the lakes and turned them amethystine, and something of repose and of distance was added to the landscape ; something I had not seen for many days. There was room in that air and space for dreams. . . ."

There is nothing classical about Lake Lucerne, no evidence of careful finish about the mountains which keep guard over the cradle of Swiss freedom, but instead there is a rude vigour of execution which recalls Ruskin's memorable phrase—"the look of mountain

brotherhood between the Cathedral and the Alp." There is no classical unity of design in the four bays, of which the cruciform lake is composed, but there is the Gothic note of changefulness and fertility of invention. The narrow fjord-like waters of Uri suffer the oppression of tremendous cliffs, but between Alpnach and Küsnacht there are broad expanses of sunlit water and openings in the mountain walls which reveal the tender distances of the Brünig valley and the gleam of remoter snows melting into the undivided depths of unending blue.

I remember leaving Lucerne on one of those days when the Gotthard divides the winter from the spring. The brown ruin of grass which had died in October showed between the patchy drifts of snow on the fields near Küsnacht. A low ceiling of grey-black cloud blunted the mountains and transformed the spire of the Mythen into a truncated pyramid. As we left Brunnen a flurry of snow blurred the steel-grey waters of the dispirited lake, and then ceased as suddenly as it had begun. Above Amsteg the line passed near to an enormous avalanche which had fanned out into a delta of tumbled ice blocks and of snow, discoloured by earth and stones, shrubs and tree branches, and the black rafters of an uprooted chalet. We crossed the Reuss, an anæmic dribble of languid water, drained of colour and music, trickling feebly round those ice-glazed rocks which the river in its strength had buried beneath a curtain of triumphant foam. With every mile of ascent the dark roof of wintry mist crept a little nearer. It was almost a relief to exchange its frosty greyness for the Egyptian darkness of the Gotthard tunnel. And then suddenly the train swept out of the tunnel into a new world, a new climate, a new season. We had exchanged winter for spring, the oppression of a cloud roof for the liberation of an Italian sky, intermittent snow flurries for flooding waves of golden sunshine.

The train sang its way down to Faido, and the rejuvenated Ticino filled the valley with its triumphant *gloria*. The fields near Biasca were gay with the footprints of spring, and on the platform at Bellinzona there were eager groups of children, Italian by race, if Swiss by allegiance, offering primroses and gentians for sale, and beyond the towers of Bellinzona a twilight confusion of southern hills and a tender melting blue that could only be Maggiore.

The frontier between Switzerland and Italy stoops from the snows of Monte Rosa and the rocks of the Gotthard to the invisible

boundary which separates the Italian and the Swiss waters of Maggiore and of Lugano. I have no taste for climatic extremes, and have never wished to explore the Arctic or the tropics. Fortunately we need not leave Switzerland to discover the austerity of the North without the desolation of the Arctic, and the charm of the South without the tyranny of tropic suns.

This Alpine synthesis of northern grandeur and southern charm plays a large role in our enjoyment of Alpine panoramas, such as the panorama from the crest of Monte Rosa on which I spent a perfect hour on the last day of June, 1914. The Monday papers, which I had not read, reported the assassination of an Archduke of whom I had never heard, but no reverberation of the pistol shot at Sarajevo ruffled the windless peace of our lofty watch-tower. Beyond the western wing of the Oberland I could see the Black Forest, and I remembered Rhineland legends, gabled roofs and Dureresque walled cities. . . . And because the blood of Angles and Saxons flows in our veins these northern landscapes speak to us in a language which we can understand, and because we are descended from men who left their northern homelands we too suffer from that "fatigue du nord" which uprooted the Goth and the Vandal, and swept them over the Alpine passes. And as I turned from the dreaming Germanies to this "tender Italy lying in her soft langour," I knew what the Goths felt when from the hard-won crest of the Alpine divide they looked down on the ravishing loveliness of the country which they named Mailand, the land of May. . . .

A faint wash of blue, Maggiore, showed through the dust of gold where the morning mists surrendered to the sun. The Lombard plain was free from cloud but in the far south the sun-tinted surf broke in spectral spray on the dark reef of the Apennines. And the mountain peace which passeth all understanding asserted its ancient power over our minds. . . .

Four weeks later Europe was at war.

Alpine nostalgia assumes different forms in different lands. By the parched river beds of Greece in August I have sighed for the tumult of Reichenbach and Lüttschine, for pines in place of olives, for cool and glacier-capped peaks in place of brown and dusty hills. And I remember returning to the Alps from an Italy which sweltered in a heat wave. The temperature inside Milan station

cannot have been far short of 100 degrees Fahrenheit, but the station was cooler than the fiery furnace of the Lombard plain. A grey shimmer of warm mist had drained Lugano of colour, and Salvatore drooped in the sultry heat, but at Bellinzona the mountains began to assert themselves. The stifling air was ruffled by the whisper of a snow-begotten breeze, and the river valley seemed charged with a benediction from the glaciers whence it came. As the train climbed the curves above Biasca the weight of southern suns fell from us and, for once, I found myself thinking of the Gotthard, not as the key to Italy, but as the welcome introduction to the Gothic north.

But it was to the Alps as the gates of Italy that my thoughts winged their way during a February week which I spent in Helsinki. On the return journey I spent some hours in Tallinn, capital of Estonia. As the short northern day was drawing to its close, I climbed a little hill overlooking the harbour where an ice-breaker was at work. The bleak wastes of the Baltic sea faded out into a grey mist. The only touch of colour in this dreary scene was provided by the red brick of a Byzantine church which was lit up by the declining sun.

I caught the night train and awoke next morning, somewhere in Lithuania, and looked out on to a drizzle of wind-drifted snow and a sad river fringed with ice and a dark forest and a watery sun struggling through colourless clouds. Twenty-four hours later I crossed the Swiss frontier. It was still winter, but winter with a difference. The snow which I had seen from my carriage window as the train carried me through the Baltic Provinces was a grey shroud covering a corpse, but the snow which was waiting for me in Switzerland was a sparkle of sun-tinted whiteness beneath which the convalescent earth was recovering her strength. And then suddenly the train turned a corner, which opened out on to the Eiger, Mönch and Jungfrau, the beloved trinity in which the soul of Switzerland finds its intimate expression. The mountains were invincibly Swiss, but the hope and promise of Italy seemed woven into the very texture of the sky above those shining mountain walls, and one knew that on the other side of this sentinel range the foot-prints of Primavera were already manifest along the shores of Como and Maggiore.

But there is more to the Alps than form and colour, how much

more I never fully realised until I visited the mountain ranges of the American continents, north and south of the Equator. I remember, for instance, a day on the Emerald Lake, as the Lago Todos los Santos in Chile is often called. The Emerald Lake is sometimes compared to Lake Lucerne. Like Lucerne it has a cruciform ground plan, narrow inlets and winding bays with sudden vistas of snow peaks and wooded hills, but the contrast between the two lakes is even more striking than their resemblances. It was not until I visited the Emerald Lake that I fully realised the importance of man as a geological agent. Man has been at work for thousands of years round the shores of Lake Lucerne. He has carved the cattle alps out of the primeval forests, and thus provided not only the cow with pasture but also the skier with open running. But man is a late-comer to the Chilean lakeland, and the slopes which rise from the Emerald Lake are choked and strangled with trees. Only a few scanty plots of green have been liberated from the dictatorship of the forests. And as the Fuji-esque volcano of glacier-capped Orsono showed between the framework of coije trees I sighed for little villages nestling near the lake, for Gothic spires and weather-stained chalets, and friendly little paths leading through the forests to the smooth beauty of the cattle alps. And I remembered the enchanted garden of San Remigio above Pallanza, and the Romanesque campanile, built eight hundred years before man invaded the Chilean lakes. Will the campanile of San Remigio still be there when the Nazis have been hunted across the Alps?

The late Mrs. Strong, an archæologist with an international reputation, once suggested to me that I should write a book to be called "Switzerland without the mountains." "It's time," she said, "that you did something to correct an illusion which you have done so much to foster, the illusion that mountains are the only things worth looking at in the Alps. A book with that aggressive title would at least advertise the existence of that other Switzerland, which is still a *terra incognita*. Don't confine yourself to the history of Switzerland, fascinating though it be, but when you've told them about the great Councils of Basle and Constance, and devoted a chapter to Calvin and Rousseau and the rest, give them some idea of the treasures of art in the museums, castles, and monasteries of Switzerland."

Frederic Harrison, an original member of the Alpine Club, would have agreed with Mrs. Strong. "Switzerland," he wrote, "might be made one of the most instructive schools of history, one of the most exquisite schools of every sense of beauty, one of the most pathetic schools of spiritual wonder—and they make it a mere playground."

It is the fashion among the less discerning members of the intelligentsia to dismiss Switzerland as the Mecca of cheap trippers and hearty athletic skiers, but there are others who fully realise that no real understanding of the forces which have shaped our European destinies is possible without some knowledge of the great events which have taken place within the frontiers of the Swiss confederation.

Along the great roads of Rome which crossed the plains of Switzerland the Cæsars posted on their way from the Tiber to the distant Rhine. All types and conditions of men, Popes and Emperors and Generals, pilgrims and merchants, have struggled across the great Alpine passes. From a little castle in northern Switzerland a knight rode forth to claim the Imperial crown, and the descendants of that Habsburg at one time ruled over Austria, Spain, the Netherlands, and as the consort of Queen Mary over England herself. In the little wooded pass of Morgarten near Lucerne that same royal house suffered a crushing and humiliating defeat, the first victory of a rude mountain democracy against feudal privilege. Within the frontiers of Switzerland battles were fought and issues debated that changed the face of Europe. Had not Burgundy been defeated near the waters of Neuchâtel, there might to-day be a buffer kingdom between France and Germany. Had Calvin and Zwingli failed, the counter-reformation might have recovered for Rome her spiritual territories which were lost at the Reformation. Had Rousseau, born in Geneva, never existed, France might have escaped her revolution. There would seem to be some slight difference of opinion as to the benefits of the Protestant Reformation and the French Revolution but their decisive importance is not in dispute, and the little country which played so influential a part in their development cannot be dismissed as a mere "playground of Europe."

"For centuries since Roman times," wrote Frederic Harrison, "few who leave their own country fail to find themselves in Switzerland. And, for at least two, if not three centuries, European literature and poetry ring with its local memories."

CHAPTER II

GREEK, ROMAN AND HEBREW

I

THE contrast between the classical and the modern feeling for scenery is a problem which admits of no easy solution. Some have tried to explain this contrast by denying its existence. Others have followed Ruskin. "The Greeks," writes Ruskin, "lived in the midst of the most beautiful nature, and were as familiar with blue sea, clear air, and sweet outlines of mountain, as we are with brick walls, black smoke and level fields. This perfect familiarity rendered all such scenes of natural beauty unexciting, if not indifferent to them." But the Hebrew also lived among beautiful surroundings and, if Ruskin's explanation were correct, a similar environment should have produced similar results, yet the Hebrew was far nearer to us than to the Greeks in his feeling for nature.

Æsthetic standards may be influenced by but are never wholly determined by material causes, such as physical environment. The prevailing philosophy of a period rather than its economics is the key to its æsthetic standards. It is, for instance, the contrast between the anthropocentric philosophy of Greece and the theocentric philosophy of the Hebrew which explains the contrast between their respective attitudes to nature.

The Greek was the most consistent humanist that the world has known, for whereas the modern humanist may deny the existence of God, the Greek humanist transformed his deities into men. The Greek gods were nothing but magnified men with the grosser vices and ambitions and petty rivalries of mankind.

Man is the hero of Greek, God of Hebraic literature. "There are many wonderful things," exclaims Sophocles, "and the most wonderful is man." "What is man that thou art mindful of him?" asks the Psalmist. The religion, art, and literature of the Greek were all shaped by his unquestioning acceptance of the maxim of Protagoras, "Man is the measure of all things." The only values that counted were human values, the one supreme reality was this life, for the Greek only believed in a dim ineffective survival beyond the grave, in a Hades tenanted by witless ghosts, drained alike of vital joy and sorrow. "I would rather," exclaims the wraith of Achilles, "live

on earth as the hind of a landless man than reign a king among the dead."

A dominant note in Greek literature is the inconsolable melancholy of those who sorrow without hope. The Greeks were obsessed by the dread of death and by the fear of old age. "The Greek anthology," writes Professor Gilbert Norwood, "except for a very few beautiful little things . . . is either erotic anatomy or grumbings upon old age." Hebrew literature assumes the pre-eminent importance of the soul. Greek literature and Greek sculpture give pre-eminence to the body.

No men valued more highly the transient joys which depend on the body, or regarded with greater horror anything which reminded them of the passing of time. This morbid pre-occupation with what Spengler calls "the bodily present moment" explains the Greek dislike of anything which suggests duration. The Greek had an almost mystical horror of the *apeiron*, that which has no limits. He could not tolerate the conception of infinity either in time or space. He would have been oppressed by the wide horizons visible from a mountain summit. There are no horizon lines in his landscape reliefs. The Gothic spire soars into the high heavens; the Greek temple is firmly married to earth. The lines of the Parthenon columns are subtly curved so as to direct the eye inwards; the entablature of the Greek temple binds the building to earth and prevents the eye escaping upwards along the line of the columns.

I have elsewhere analysed the influence of the Greek hatred of duration on his drama and his sculpture. Greek drama is *situation* drama rather than a drama of personalities. There are no statues so impersonal as the Greek. Praxiteles reproduced with consummate artistry the bodily surface of the young man who posed for his Hermes. But the soul is missing.

And the soul is missing in every Homeric landscape. The Greek had no sense of personality in nature. To the Greek a sea wave was nothing but salt water, a mountain crag nothing but inanimate rock. He had no sympathy for mountain or sea, hill or stream. "What sympathy and fellowship he had," writes Ruskin, "were always for the spirit *in* the stream, not for the stream; always for the dryad *in* the wood, not for the wood." The Greek, as Chesterton somewhere says, could not see the wood for the dryads. "If one imagines," writes Mr. Ridley, "a being dwelling in a fountain, it is just because one does not think of a fountain as a being in itself."

Ruskin praises the "peculiar dignity" of the passages which he cites from Greek literature, passages which "limit their expression to the pure fact" and he commends the Greeks for obtaining their effects without recourse to what he calls the "pathetic fallacy," that is the fallacy of attributing personality to inanimate nature, "accepting sympathy from nature which we do not believe it gives, and giving sympathy to nature, which we do not believe it receives." Had Ruskin practised what he preached, none of his greater descriptive passages would have been written. Few word-painters have been less restricted by "pure fact" or made more felicitous use of the "pathetic fallacy," as for instance in this description of Alpine forests. "For the resources of trees are not developed until they have difficulty to contend with; neither their tenderness of brotherly love and harmony, till they are forced to choose their ways of various life where there is contracted room for them, talking to each other with their restrained branches. . . ." But why "pathetic?" The feelings which we attribute to inanimate nature are not necessarily sorrowful. There is nothing pathetic in Ruskin's metaphor—"tenderness of brotherly love." And why "fallacy?" A fallacy disguises falsehood under the deceptive appearance of truth. Ruskin did not intend to deceive his readers into believing the trees really love one another like brothers. The "pathetic fallacy" so far from seeking to impose falsehood under the mask of truth, suggests by the use of metaphors deeper truths than could ever be conveyed by "pure fact."

An exclusive pre-occupation with "pure fact" and with the physical aspects of nature narrows our field of vision and blinds us to the truths which the poet and the mystic perceive. The most important facts about a mountain are not those which a geologist can discover or a photograph reveal, but the relationship between the loveliness of snow wreath or granite crest to the beauty which is timeless and eternal. The attribution of personality to inanimate nature is inspired by the conscious or unconscious recognition of the great truth that the personality of the Creator is partially revealed in the beauty of his creation, and the degree to which writers make use of the "pathetic fallacy" in their descriptions of nature is some indication of their awareness of the quasi-sacramental nature of visible beauty. And it is significant that scholars who try to discover traces of a genuine passion for scenery in classics invariably quote examples of the "pathetic fallacy" such as

ποντίων τε κυμάτων ἀνήριθμον γέλασμα

"The innumerable laughter of the Sea" (Æschylus)

"innumerable" indeed are the occasions on which the "innumerable laughter" of the Æschylean sea has been quoted against me, but how rare is the pathetic fallacy in Greek literature and how exceptional any appreciative allusions to the sea. It is with a shock of surprise that one chances on χαῖρε θάλασσα φίλη "farewell dear sea" in Plato's epitaph for the Eritrean dead, but Plato in this, as in so much else, was an aberrant from the Greek tradition. Socrates, on the other hand, spoke as a representative Greek when he said that woods and fields had taught him nothing "Only men in cities have taught me anything."

There is a charming poem by Meleager which approaches the modern attitude to nature, but Meleager lived at Gadara on the shores of Lake Galilee and was probably influenced by the Hebrew attitude to nature. Somewhere about 60 B.C. he wrote some beautiful lines about the "shower-loving Narcissus" (pathetic fallacy) and "the lilies that wander over the hills," a lovely phrase but not as lovely as a later allusion to lilies by One who, like Meleager, had often walked beside the shores of Galilee.

The Roman attitude to nature is slightly nearer our own than the Greek. Lucretius had a discerning eye for the majesty and loveliness of clouds. There is a charming picture of early morning mists rising from river in the golden lines beginning

"Aurea cum primum gemmantis rore per herbas
matutina rubent radiati lumina solis
exhalantque lacus nebulam fluviiue perennes. . . ."

Virgil's nature philosophy has far more in common with Homer's than with Wordsworth or Tennyson. First in his hierarchy of affection is the earth, *justissima tellus*, the fruitful soil which has been conquered and transformed by the *labor improbus* of man. He loves the rural charm of the countryside, springtime and harvest, but he was not wholly unmoved by the undomesticated loveliness of untamed nature. "The shrill sound of the approaching south-west wind, the sea shore smitten by the waves, and rivers flowing down rocky valleys" pleased him no less than well-tilled fields. But neither the Alps nor the Apeninnes left any impression on his poetry, and

though he was born at Mantua, not very far from Lake Garda, there is only one bleak reference in all his works to the Italian lakes

“te, Lari, maxime, teque
fluctibus et fremitu adsurgens Benace marino?”

“Como, the greatest, and Garda the surge and tumult of whose waves are like the sea.” For every day of storm there are twenty when Garda is a smooth expanse of incomparable colour. Virgil’s brief reference to the Italian lakes occurs in a noble tribute to the beauties of Italy. It is significant that he has been content only to record the fact that Como is very big, and Garda very rough. Catullus, perhaps the greatest lyrical poet of classical literature, makes amends to Garda. He built himself a villa on the peninsula of Sirmio which runs out into the lake, and his love for Garda finds expression in a poem which reads like an anticipation of the romantic movement. *Sirmio* achieves its most charming effects by skilful use of the pathetic fallacy.

“Salve, o venusta Sirmio, atque ero gaude ;
guadete vosque o Lydiæ lacus undæ ;
ridete, quicquid est domi cachinnorum.”

“Hail, beautiful Sirmio, and rejoice with your master, and you waves of the Lydian lake rejoice, and laugh out all the laughter that is in my home.”

But such passages are very rare, for the classical attitude to Nature was governed by practical rather than by æsthetic considerations. Homer valued nature only in so far as nature was disciplined for human use and subservient to human comfort. “Every Homeric landscape,” writes Ruskin, “intended to be beautiful is composed of a fountain, a meadow and a shady grove.” Homer liked rain for reasons which will be patent to those who have seen the arid hills of Greece in summer. Ithaca is not “rich in meadows,” but, at least, there is “always rain.” Homer loved the dawn, not necessarily because he thought it beautiful, but because, like all men, he preferred light to darkness and warmth to cold. The Homeric shepherd rejoices when the wind blows away the clouds at night and the stars come out, because a clear night is much pleasanter than a stormy night. And every Homeric sailor prefers the safe harbour to the perilous sea. No Greek braved the sea for the sake of adventure. Long after the Phœnicians had risked the open

ocean, the Greek sailors still hugged the coasts. "Who would *willingly*," exclaims Homeric Hermes, "hasten over the immensities of the sea?"

The quotations which I shall cite in support of the conclusions summarised in the preceding paragraphs are mainly from Homer, but a detailed analysis of any other of the great Greek poets would yield a similar result, for Homer in his attitude to nature was a thoroughly representative Greek, not only of his own age but also of the fourth and fifth centuries B.C.

My argument will be based not on intuition but on texts. I do not consider that it is legitimate to attribute to "Greek restraint" the tiresome reluctance of the Greeks to express—what *we* feel. If the Greeks loved nature and failed to make this clear we should criticise them as poor craftsmen, not praise them for their restraint, but Homer is open to no such criticism. No "Greek restraint" inhibits him from expressing his admiration for the beauty of Helen, the courage of Hector, the wiles of Odysseus and the fidelity of Penelope. And though the romantic Hellenists expect us to read our feeling for scenery into Homer's bleak and factual descriptions of sea and hill, it is unnecessary to read our sense of tragedy into the immortal passage in which Hector bids farewell to Andromache or our affection for a favourite dog into Homer's description of the death of Argos.

It should be possible to discuss the evolution of our attitude to nature without basing our conclusions on the "missing links" in the argument. My own interpretation of the Greek attitude, whatever may be its other demerits, is at least based on what the Greeks said and not on what they were restrained from saying. I am, for instance, rash enough to suppose that Homer's use of *καλός* (beautiful), and *περικαλλής* (very beautiful) are some indication of what Homer believed to be beautiful. He applies the epithet *καλός* to women, a woman's face, men, Gany-mede, Odysseus, and sandals. He applies the epithet *περικαλλής* to Penelope's handiwork, to a lyre, to fields, court and altar, chariot, gift, bed, chairs, to a girl and to Chloris, to a man's eyes, to a harbour and to a stream. I can recall no line in which Homer describes as "beautiful," mountains, or the open sea, or the clouds. And the only references to the beauty of the stars are those in which the stars are merely referred to as simile. The light from the spear of Achilles is compared to "Hesperos, most

beautiful star in the heaven" and Hector's child is termed "beautiful as a star."

At a recent dinner of the Alpine Club I found myself involved in a discussion with a distinguished scholar who disagreed with my interpretation of the Homeric attitude to nature. He quoted against me Tennyson's translation of Homer's description of the Trojan camp-fires,

"As when in heaven the stars about the moon
Look beautiful."

But the word ἀριπρεπέα which Tennyson translates "Beautiful" means "very clear" in this context, according to Liddell and Scott, who quote this actual line. My friend took no risks with his second quotation which he gave me in the original,

ἐπρησεν δ' ἄνεμος μέσον ἱστίον, ἀμφὶ δὲ κύμα
στεῖρη πορφύρεον μεγάλ' ἰαχῇ νηὸς ἰούσης

which Loeb translates "So the wind filled the belly of the sail, and the dark wave sang soundly about the stem of the ship." But no Homeric wave ever sang, and the word translated "sang" means "resounded."

"It is impossible," said my friend, "to read these lines and deny that Homer had a real feeling for the beauty of the sea and for the feel of a ship driving before the wind." For the beauty of the sea? I think not. Naturally the Homeric sailor would be grateful for a following wind which would carry him all the more swiftly across the dread ocean to the safety of harbour. And observe how the note changes at the end of this very passage.

Ἡέλιος δ' ἀνόρουσε, λιπὼν περικαλλέα λίμνην,
οὐρανὸν ἔς πολύχαλκον. . . .

"And now the sun leaving the beautiful mere sprang into the brazen heaven." λίμνη is a generic word for land-locked water, mere or pool of standing water left by the sea, and it was only in land-locked water that Homer and the Homeric sailor discovered beauty, a conclusion which is reinforced by a comparison of the epithets which Homer used for the sea which he did not like and for the dawn which he did. He will describe the dawn as rosy-fingered, fair-tressed or golden-throned, but his epithets for the sea are either bleak and factual or expressive of active dislike. He will describe waves as "over-roofed" or "compact-black" and one of

his favourite and most inept epithets for the Mediterranean is "grey." Nobody who really loved the Mediterranean would transfer the colour of the foam (and even for the foam "grey" is inadequate) to the most colourful of all conceivable seas. Most of his epithets for the sea are depreciatory.

Thus the sea is ἀρπύγεος (barren) in contrast to ζῆλδωπος, the grain-giving earth. Nothing is clearer than that happiness began for the Homeric sailor when he had crossed "the dread gulfs of the barren sea," and could offer sacrifice in thanksgiving on the altar of Poseidon.

Similes are sometimes a useful guide to a writer's æsthetic standards. The first use of mountains in Homeric simile is, as Mr. Norman Young was the first to point out, "to represent big, ugly people." The Cyclops is "like a wooded peak of the towering hills," and the queen of the Læstrygones was "huge of bulk as a mountain peak and loathsome." Elsewhere a mountain simile is used to suggest hard-heartedness, and once only for steadfastness.

I have been struck by the fact that the classical simile begins with man, and uses nature only to interpret man, whereas modern nature similes begin with nature and interpret nature by means of human analogies. Thus Homer starts with man and compares man to a rock, the steadfast Danaans resisting the Trojan onslaughts like a sea cliff defying the waves. Whympet begins with the rock and compares it to man. The Matterhorn "proved to be a stubborn foe; it resisted long and gave many a hard blow; it was defeated at last with an ease that none could have anticipated, but, like a relentless enemy—conquered but not crushed—it took a terrible vengeance." Again whereas Homer compares the missiles hurled against each other by Trojan and Achæan to a snowstorm, Leslie Stephen compares the "snow on a half-buried chalet" to a "kind hand laid softly on a sick man's brows." Virgil, again, is only interested in the Apennines because they provide him with a simile for Æneas preparing for battle.

"Quantus Athos aut quantus Eryx aut ipse coruscis
Cum fremit ilicibus quantus gaudetque nivali
Vertice se attollens pater Appenninus ad auras."

Mr. Douglas Freshfield once attempted to prove that the Greeks must have admired mountains seeing that they associated mountains and hills with shrines and pilgrimages and assigned Olympus to be

the seat of the gods. Mr. Freshfield's allusion to pilgrimages proves him to have been writing of something wholly foreign to his own experience. The site for a shrine was not selected for its beauty or for its amenities but for its difficulty of access. A pilgrimage is supposed to be a test of the pilgrim's devotion, of his readiness to endure hardship and face perils to merit a supernatural reward. It was not because mountains were deemed to be beautiful but because they were known to be dangerous that shrines were so often placed on mountain tops.

Admittedly the Greeks often associated legend with the more impressive features of their landscape, such as Parnassus, Kithairon or the Schiste, but nobody deduces from the legend of Scylla and Charybdis that Greek sailors loved whirlpools or rocks which threatened shipwreck, and these legends merely establish the truism which nobody denies that mountains and the sea aroused emotions in the mind of the Greeks. The question at issue is whether these emotions were those of love or hatred. Nobody asserts that the "Old Contemptibles" had a great affection for Flemish scenery because their experiences gave birth to the legend of the Angel of Mons.

It was because the Greek gods were of the earthy that they had to be provided with an earthy home. The God of the Hebrews reigned in high Heaven, but the Olympic deities had to be domiciled in Greece. "It was necessary," as Mr. Norman Young pointed out, "that the gods should be able to look down on the earth, yet the anthropomorphic tendencies of the age subjected them to the same disabilities as modern aviators, namely inability to remain motionless in the air. It therefore became necessary for them to take possession of the highest fixed support, Olympus."

Homer reconciled himself with difficulty to the choice of so disagreeable a site as a mountain top for a divine habitation. *Real* mountains were so repulsive that it was necessary to transform Olympus into an idealised mountain. "It is not shaken by winds, nor wet with rain. The snow does not come near to it, but mist-clear air is spread above it cloudless, and the white light floats over it. There the blessed gods are happy for all their days."

II

"Whereas God is a conclusion to the Greek," writes Sir Richard Livingstone, "for the Hebrew he is the first premise." Homer, as we have seen, accepts usefulness to man as the supreme criterion for scenery. He looked at the mountains and decided that they were only good—for thieves. "The mountains are covered with mists which are bad for shepherds but better than night for thieves." To the Hebrew, on the other hand, the majesty of the mountains revealed the glory of God. "God shall come down from Lebanon and the holy one from the shady and thickly covered mountain. His majesty has covered the heavens, and the earth is full of his presence."

The God of the Hebrews was not only the creator of the earth, but a Creator who rejoiced in his works.

"Oh, Lord, how manifold are all thy works ! In wisdom hast thou made them all : the earth is full of thy riches. . . . The glory of the Lord shall endure for ever : the Lord shall rejoice in his works. He looketh at the earth, and it trembleth : he toucheth the hills, and they smoke."

The beauty of the earth, transformed by man for his service, is the inspiration of passages in the Bible, as lovely as anything in Virgil or Theocritus.

"My beloved spake, and said unto me, Rise up, my love, my fair one and come away. For, lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone ; the flowers appear on the earth ; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land."

Passages such as these can be paralleled in classical literature, but the greatest passages in the Bible attain to heights denied to Homer and Virgil.

Greek similes, as we have seen, began with man. Homer compares Hector's child to a star, but the Hebrew began with the stars and proceeded thence to God. "The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament sheweth his handywork." Homer compared the ugly Cyclops to a mountain ; but it is to the mountains that the Hebrew turns for a simile to suggest the supreme reality of the universe. "Thy righteousness is like the great mountains." And when Moses called the people of Israel together to bless them before he died, he gave thanks "for the chief things of the ancient mountains and for the precious things of the lasting

hills," and it is to the summit of a mountain that the lover in the *Song of Solomon* invites his beloved. "Come with me from Lebanon, my spouse, with me from Lebanon : look from the top of Amana, from the top of Shenir and Hermon, from the lions' dens, from the mountains of the leopards."

The note of tenderness, so unusual in classical allusions to nature, is ever present in the Bible. "The mountains and the fields shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. . . ." "The little hills rejoice on every side . . . the valleys also are covered with corn, they shout for joy and they also sing." The Hebrew never felt oppressed by the majesty of nature. A note not only of tenderness and affection but also of confidence and trust characterises many of his allusions to hills and mountains. "The mountains shall bring peace to the people and the little hills righteousness. . . ." "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills from whence cometh my help."

And because the Hebrew attitude to nature is infinitely more spiritual than the Greek, the pathetic fallacy is as common in Hebrew as it is rare in Greek literature.

"The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them ; and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing : the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon, they shall see the glory of the Lord, and the excellency of our God." Beauty is a bye-product of truth. The theocentric philosophy of the Hebrew was based on truth, and Hebrew literature therefore attains to a beauty denied to the anthropocentric Greek. The culture of Greece was the finest that humanism has produced, but humanism is not enough.

"Hath the rain a father ? or who hath begotten the drops of dew ? Out of whose womb came the ice ? And the hoary frost of heaven, who hath gendered it ? The waters are hid as with a stone, and the face of the deep is frozen. Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades or loose the bands of Orion ? "

It is impossible to match this passage in classical literature. The superiority of the Bible is a superiority of spiritual insight. Nothing in Homer or Virgil rivals the humanity, realism and dramatic power with which the life-story of David unfolded. The finest short story in the world is the story of the woman taken in adultery.

It was not until Hellenism found her soul in Christianity that

the Greek genius achieved its supreme masterpieces, the gospel of St. John in literature, in architecture Santa Sophia, and in painting the supreme achievements of El Greco.

III

The principles of landscape-painting have been discussed in innumerable books, but I have so far searched in vain for a detailed analysis of the technique of word-painting. Ruskin, who was a master of this art, so little understood his own methods that he eulogised Homer for resolutely avoiding the very artifices which he himself employed with consummate skill. He quotes Keat's description of a breaking wave,

"Down whose green back the short-lived foam all hoar
Bursts gradual, with a wayward insolence."

"Homer," Ruskin continues, "could not by any possibility have lost sight of the great fact that the wave, from the beginning to the end of it, do what it might, was still nothing else than salt water ; and that salt water could not be either wayward or indolent. He will call the waves 'over-roofed,' 'full-charged,' 'monstrous,' 'compact-black,' 'dark-clear,' 'violet-coloured,' 'wine-coloured' and so on. But every one of these epithets is descriptive of pure physical nature . . . they are as accurate and as intense in truth as words can be, but they never show the slightest feeling of anything animated in the ocean. Black or clear, monstrous or violet-coloured, cold sea water it is always, and nothing but that."

Poets never confine themselves to purely *factual* epithets when they are describing what they love. Homer, as we have seen, describes the dawn as "rosy-fingered," "fair-tressed" and "golden-throned," epithets which are certainly not "descriptive of pure physical nature."

It is difficult to isolate the greatness of Homer and Virgil, and to credit them only with the supreme qualities which they possessed. They rise like noble peaks on the distant horizon, an enchanted background to the main streets and factory chimneys of our own industrial civilisation. I can never decide whether the page of Virgil with which I begin the day helps me to endure or provokes me to revolt against the prospect which awaits me when I draw the curtains. In such moods of regret for all the loveliness of this earth

when the world was young, it is only too easy to read into Homer our own sense of beauty. "When they came within the deep harbour, they furled their sails and laid them in the dark ship, and themselves disembarked on the beach of the sea." How far was Homer conscious of the beauty of what was to him the routine of disembarkation? Do we, who contrast the shapely Greek ship with a steamer belching smoke from its funnels, and a blue harbour in the Aegean with Cardiff or Liverpool, read into these lines a romance of which Homer was wholly unconscious? Surely what Homer wished to suggest was not the beauty of the scene, but the relief of the sailors on reaching harbour.

Translate what Homer saw into twentieth-century terms, and we have a cross-channel steamer entering Folkestone harbour and a description, as matter-of-fact as Homer's, of the routine of disembarkation would read as follows: "The sailors put down the gangway, and the landing officer said, 'Have your passports ready, please.' And the sea-sick passengers passed into the Customs' shed."

There is very little in Homer which evokes our own Mediterranean memories, and it is with a shock of surprise that one chances on a line which paints a picture, such as that of the shadowy mountains which showed beyond the wave horizon so that the land of the Phæcians "showed like a shield in the misty sea,"

εἶσατο δ' ὥς ὅτε ρινὸν ἐν ἡεροειδέϊ πόντῳ

but it would be easier to believe that Homer saw the beauty which we see in "shadowy mountains" beyond a horizon of sea if we could forget that Homer's thoughts turn instinctively to mountains when he is in search of a simile for ugly people.

Those who persist in reading Homer through the spectacles of the Romantic revival invoke "Greek restraint" to explain his silences, and praise as "Greek simplicity" many a line which is nothing more than a bleak catalogue of things seen.

There is no line in poetry, ancient or modern, which, to me at least, is more evocative of remembered beauty than the list of stations inscribed on the metal plaques which are affixed to the railway carriages of continental expresses. In moments of depression I repeat to myself those litanies of lovely names. . . . *Calais—Delle—Berne—Spiez—Interlaken . . . Boulogne—Laon—Berne—Brig—Domodossola—Milano—Verona—Venezia . . .* But for all their

"Greek simplicity" and in spite of their magic power to recreate the loveliness that is gone, these mere lists of place-names are not literature.

Yet another example of the distinction between literature and a record of "the mere it was." The scene is the Caribbean sea. Portholes had been closed as a precaution against submarines, and I decided to sleep on deck. I watched the crescent moon and the Pleiades sink behind the shadowy rim of the sea horizon, and these words rose unbidden to my lips. . . . "The moon is set and the Pleiades are gone and midnight is near, and the hours pass, and I sleep alone." "And why, pray," asks the reader, "should you deem it worth while to record a monologue, which is nothing but a bleak statement of fact, untouched by poetic insight?" Maybe, maybe, but the monologue was the translation of a poem by Sappho, much lauded for its "Greek simplicity."

Δέδυκε μὲν ἃ σελάννα
καὶ Πληιάδες, μέσαι δὲ
νύκτες παρὰ δ' ἔρχετ' ὥρα
ἔγω δὲ μόνα κατεύδω

When we escape from the drizzle of November fogs into our libraries we do not turn to Homer in search of the evocative line which will restore the fading colour of our own Mediterranean memories, but to some such poet as Shelley,

"Thou who didst waken from his summer dreams
The blue Mediterranean, where he lay
Lulled by the coil of his crystalline streams
Beside a pumice isle in Baiæ's bay,
And saw in sleep old palaces and towers
Quivering within the wave's intenser day."

You will never match those lines in the classics, for it was not until the Romantic revival that the art of word-painting was mastered. Even Virgil himself, is not, in this respect at least, the equal of some modern poets and prose-poets. That great Virgilian, Father Bruno James, disputes this verdict. He quotes the following passage from the *Æneid* (vii. 25).

"Jamque rubescebat radiis mare et æthere ab alto
Aurora in croceis fulgebat lutea bigis,
cum venti posuere omnisque repente resedit
flatus et in lento luctantur marmore tonsæ."

"And now the sea was blushing with the morning rays, and in the high heaven saffron Aurora shone in her golden car, when the winds dropped and every breath of air suddenly subsided, and the oars labour in the sluggish sea."

"I challenge you," writes Father James, "to find among the moderns a lovelier description of sunrise at sea, than this."

Here is my answer to the challenge, a passage from Meredith's *Beauchamp's Career*.

"The Adriatic was dark, the Alps had heaven to themselves. Crescents and hollows, rosy mounds, white shelves, shining ledges, domes and peaks, all the towering heights were in illumination from Friùli into farthest Tyrol; beyond earth to the stricken senses of the gazers. Colour was steadfast on the massive front ranks; it wavered in the remoteness, and was quick and dim as though it fell on beating wings."

The formal epithets and conventional mythology of the Virgilian sunrise might have occurred to a poet blind from birth, but nobody who had not seen what Meredith saw could have written what Meredith wrote. The words which I have quoted could only have been written by a poet whose vision was discerning as it was profound, quick to note the most fugitive effects of evanescent loveliness, and to uncover the hidden nexus which links beauty in its varied manifestations. The mark of a great poet, said Aristotle, is the skill with which he uses metaphor. In all the literature of landscape there can be few lovelier and, at the same time, apter metaphors than Meredith's "as though it fell on beating wings."

The painter in oil or water colour has an infinite choice of colour and line at his disposal, but the meagre palette of the word-painter compels him to employ every possible artifice if he is ambitious to describe the infinite variety of mountain or sea, plain or running water. If he confines himself to factual epithets he can only suggest the cruder contrasts, between, shall we say, the Matterhorn and the Rigi, or between a stormy and a becalmed sea. He cannot hope to discriminate between two views, generically similar, as for instance the distant views of Monte Rosa from Milan, or Paloma from Santiago. All peaks are high, all valleys profound, rock needles soar, and cliffs are often rugged, and torrents not infrequently roar and snow often gleams. "Pure fact" may conjure up a generalised picture of mountains in the mind of the reader who is familiar with mountains, but the epithets which apply

to mountains in general are useless if we are attempting to discriminate between one mountain view and another.

The secret of *evocative* writing, that is of writing which evokes in the mind of the reader a clear picture of the scene described, and of the emotions which that scene awakens in the spectator is to be sought in the discreet blending of factual epithets with simile, metaphor and, above all, analogy.

Let us compare one of the few attempts to describe a mountain sunrise in the classics (Euripides. Ion. 87).

Παρνησιάδες δ' ἄβατοι κορυφαὶ
καταλαμβάνονται τὴν ἡμέραν
ἄψίδα βροτοῖσι δέχονται

The untrodden crests of Parnassus shine forth and welcome for mortals the orb of the new day.

Compare this with a famous quatrain of Tennyson's

"How faintly-flush'd, how phantom-fair,
Was Monte Rosa, hanging there
A thousand shadowy-pencill'd valleys
And snowy dells in a golden air."

There is nothing in the lines quoted from Euripides which could not be applied with equal felicity to any mountain dawn, whether seen from within the heart of a mountain range or from the distant plains. Tennyson on the other hand crystallises in four perfect lines the unique quality of the remoter snows, glowing in the dawn, "hanging there" above the shadowy foothills. And he achieves his effect by a perfect balance between factual epithets and metaphor.

And here is a passage from Mr. Belloc's *The Path to Rome*, which is not only one of the loveliest descriptions of a sunrise in all literature, but which has also the note of differentiation, in so far as he is concerned to evoke a picture not of sunrises in general but of a *southern* sunrise in particular.

"Then suddenly the sky grew lighter upon every side. That cheating gloom (which I think the clouds in purgatory must reflect) lifted from the valley as though to a slow order given by some calm and good influence that was marshalling in the day. Their colours came back to things; the trees recovered their shape, life, and trembling; here and there, on the face of the mountain

opposite, the mists by their movement took part in the new life, and I thought I heard for the first time the tumbling water far below me in the ravine. . . . There, without any warning of colours, or of the heraldry that we have in the north, the sky was a great field of pure light, and without doubt it was all woven through, as was my mind watching it, with security and gladness."

Our sunrise passages began with Virgil, and let us return to Virgil for the sunset,

"et jam summa procul villarum culmina fumant
majoresque cadunt altis de montibus umbræ."

I love these lines. I wonder why. "*And now afar off the smoke ascends from the cottage-roofs, and from the high mountains the larger shadows fall.*"

A man need not be a great poet both to observe and to record the plain fact that smoke rises from cottage chimneys and that sunset shadows creep down from the mountain side. It is the form not the content of these lines which appeals to us.

And here is a famous sunset passage from Goethe's *Faust* :

"Ich sah' im ewigen Abendstrahl
Die stille Welt zu meinen Füßen
Entzündet alle Höhn, beruhigt jedes Thal,
Den Silberbach in goldne Ströme fliessen."

Goethe's lines are more evocative than Virgil's. He is writing not of sunsets in general but of a sunset seen from on high, and the intrusion of simple metaphors reinforces the effect of factual epithets, but I suspect it is the perfection of form once again which is the chief merit of these lines. My last sunset passage is from Leslie Stephen's description of sunset from Mont Blanc.

"The lower mountain ranges appeared to be drawn up in parallel ranks like the sea-waves heaved in calm weather by a monotonous ground-swell. Each ridge was blended into a uniform hue by the intervening atmosphere, sharply defined along the summit line, and yet only distinguished from its predecessor and successor by a delicate gradation of tone. Such a view produces the powerful but shadowy impression which one expects from an opium dream. The vast perspective drags itself out to a horizon so distant as to blend imperceptibly with the lower sky. It has a vague suggestion of rhythmical motion, strangely combined with eternal

calm. Drop a pebble into a perfectly still sheet of water ; imagine that each ripple is supplanted by a lofty mountain range, of which all detail is lost in purple haze, and that the furthest undulations melt into the mysterious infinite. One gazes with a sense of soothing melancholy as one listens to plaintive modulations of some air of ' linked sweetness long drawn out '."

• Many people are more sensitive to sound than to sight. Father Bruno James, for instance, tells me that he has to translate a beautiful view into sound before he can appreciate it. It must be difficult for those who are so acutely sensitive to the music of the written word to criticise Virgil with detachment, for the Virgilian melody makes it only too easy to confuse form and content, and to praise content because of its form. I am not suggesting that form is a gratuitous ornament imposed from without, or that the great poets aimed at melodious diction for its own sake. Form may be related to content as the body to the soul, but however inseparable body and soul may be, it is possible to *judge* them separately. We can pay a tribute to a woman's beauty without necessarily admitting that her soul is beautiful. And just as a lovely face often helps to disguise an unlovely soul, so the beauty of form often blunts our critical sense in our estimate of commonplace content.

Translation is a valuable corrective to verdicts unduly influenced by form. All poetry inevitably loses in translation, but whereas the noblest passages in Homer and in Virgil, passages the content of which is as great as the form is beautiful, are profoundly moving even in translation, the lines which Father James quoted would be banal and flat in any translation which was reasonably accurate. Even in translation the great passages which I have quoted from Isaiah and Job are nobler and more beautiful than the masterpieces of Virgil and Homer in the languages in which those masterpieces were originally written.

In the literary criticism of the classics the proportion of precise thought to uncritical enthusiasm is nowhere smaller than in the appraisal of classical word-painting. It is not only that in the judgment of values, form and content are so often confused, but there is also a failure to discriminate between the respective roles of author and reader in the evocation of remembered beauty. Thus even the bleakest description of mountains will help a mountain lover to recreate his mountain past. Simple words serve as pegs on which we can hang our memories, but it is *our* memories and not

the author's genius that is evocative. The Virgilian descriptions of dawn and sunset are perfect miniatures so far as *form* is concerned, but so far as content is concerned they do not bear analysis—or translation. Apart from form, many descriptive passages in the classics are inferior to those which we owe to that great master of Greek simplicity—Baedeker.

The over-praise of classical word-painting is confined to scholars who are unexact in their standards not only of word-painting but also of natural scenery. A good eye for scenery is no more common than a good ear for music. The uninformed and uncritical pleasure with which I listen to my favourite operas and symphonies is comparable to the vague indiscriminating enjoyment which is all that many people feel in the presence of mountains or the sea.

The sound of all others which I long to hear again is the old alphorn on the way to the Upper Glacier at Grindelwald, awakening its echoes in the cliffs of the Mettenberg. That it is not only the musically uneducated who enjoy the alphorns is proved by the fact that there is, so De Beer tells me, good reason to suppose that Beethoven borrowed the tune of the Rigi alphorn for the prelude to the fourth movement of the "Pastoral" symphony.

Now if I were to assert that the Greek simplicity of the Rigi alphorn can evoke in a few notes greater beauty than Beethoven in the whole of the Sixth Symphony I should be saying something as difficult to refute and as impossible to justify as the assertion that Homer and Virgil can evoke with a few apt words a picture which the moderns could not suggest in as many lines. To my mind a poet who can only see the smoke ascending from the cottage roofs and the larger shadows falling from the mountains sees less than Leslie Stephen saw from the summit of Mont Blanc, but I cannot, of course, argue with people who read into these simple lines a whole range of thought and vision, for which their only authority is a private illumination denied to me. I can only repeat that Virgil's sunrise and sunset passages seem to me to bear much the same relation to Hilaire Belloc's and Leslie Stephen's as the alphorn, which I love, bears to a Beethoven symphony. It is as difficult to describe music as to describe scenery in words, but whereas I, who have an uneducated ear would never presume to criticise the descriptive writing which attempts to interpret music in writing, scholars with an uneducated eye for scenery have tried to convince me that Homer and Virgil are superior to any modern

word-painters. The truth is that the classical writers were making the first tentative experiments in an art which only reached maturity in the Romantic movement.

Metaphor, analogy and the pathetic fallacy all play their part in the art of evocative writing. Ruskin grudgingly admitted that the pathetic fallacy was sometimes legitimate, but his tone is that of a strict casuist, who, starting from the premise that falsehood is always wrong, is prepared reluctantly to concede that a verbal deceit is sometimes justifiable as, for instance, when an assassin seeks information as to the road taken by his intended victim. Ruskin who reproved Coleridge because in his lines,

“ The one red leaf, the last of its clan,
That dances as often dance it can ”

he “ fancies a life in it (the leaf), and will which there are not ; confuses its powerlessness with choice, its fading death with merri-ment, and the wind that shakes it with music,” but Ruskin writes charmingly of “ pieces of wave which danced all day.” This phrase occurs in his little-known description of the Rhone at Geneva, a description in which Ruskin breaks all his own rules, deviates from “ pure fact ” and makes free use of the pathetic fallacy. But the result is superb. Observe how Ruskin *differentiates* between sea waves, and river waves, between great torrents, pools and mill streams, and achieves his effect by evoking the subtler facts which no factual epithets can evoke, the delicate truths which can only be suggested by metaphor, analogy and the pathetic fallacy.

“ Waves of clear sea are, indeed, lovely to watch, but they are always coming or gone, never in any taken shape to be seen for a second. But here was one mighty wave that was always itself, and every fluted whirl of it, constant as the wreathing of a shell. No wasting away of the fallen foam, no pause for gathering of power, no helpless ebb of discouraged recoil but alike through bright day and lulling night, the never-pausing plunge, and never-fading flash. . . .

“ The innocent way, too, in which the river used to stop to look into every little corner. Great torrents always seem angry, and great rivers too often seem sullen ; but there is no anger, no disdain in the Rhone. It seemed as if the mountain stream was in mere bliss at recovering itself again out of the lake-sleep, and raced because it

rejoiced in racing, fain yet to return and stay. There were pieces of wave that danced all day as if Perdita were looking on to learn ; there were little streams that skipped like lambs and leaped like chamois, there were pools that shook the sunshine all through them, and were rippled in layers of overlaid ripples, like crystal sand ; there were currents that twisted the light into golden braids, and inlaid the threads with turquoise enamel ; there were strips of stream that had certainly above the lake been millstreams, and were looking busily for mills to turn again ; there were shoots of stream that had once shot fearfully into the air, and now sprang up again laughing that they had only fallen a foot or two ; and in the midst of all the gay glittering and eddied lingering, the noble bearing by of the midmost depth, so mighty, yet so terrorless and harmless, with its swallows skimming instead of petrels, and the dear old decrepit town as safe in the embracing sweep of it as if it were set in a brooch of sapphire."

CHAPTER III

THE DISCOVERY OF MOUNTAIN BEAUTY

I

CHRISTIANITY was responsible for a slow, silent but decisive revolution in Western man's attitude to nature.

What Homer was to the Greeks, the Bible was to the Christians, and gradually the Hebraic attitude to nature replaced the Hellenic.

Man's attitude to creation was insensibly modified by the Christian doctrine of a Creator, who invited and who reciprocated man's love. Classical man feared the gods, but did not love them. Religion was a science, the science of placating deities of uncertain temper and unpredictable mood. *Cede deo*. Yield to the god. If a god is hostile do not resist. Such was the doctrine which Æneas learned by hard experience. Juno had schemed his destruction, but instead of rebelling, he studied to propitiate her. Æneas indeed might be adopted as the patron saint of appeasers, for he, at least, was successful. Juno was mollified, and the Roman Empire was founded.

The Greek preferred domesticated nature to woods and hills, for the wood concealed dryads and oreads haunted the hills. The Hebrew conception of a Creator who revealed himself in the majesty and the beauty of his creation was wholly foreign to the Greek mind. Creation was the habitat not only of man, but of dangerous Elementals, and the Greek did not like the wood any the better because it was inhabited by dryads. Milton could write with wistful regret of the retreat of the old gods before the advance of Christianity,

“ From haunted spring and dale
Edged with poplar pale
The parting genius is with sighing sent.”

But Milton did not believe in the old gods. It was otherwise with the pagan for whom dryad, oread and faun were not romantic additions to classical scenery but unpredictable and potentially dangerous Elementals. The baptised pagan did not speed the “parting genius” with sighs. On the contrary he would have sighed with relief had the old gods vanished for ever from his world, instead of lingering

on in the guise of demons. Even so the twilight of the gods coincided with the dawn of hope, for Christianity proclaimed the good news of a Friend behind phenomena, an all-powerful Friend, to whom the whole hierarchy of evil spirits was subject. The beauty of creation gradually assumed a new significance for those who remembered that Christ had found in this beauty an assurance of the protective love of the Creator. "Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not neither do they spin: and yet I say unto you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. . . . Wherefore if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?"

Ausonius the poet, born a pagan, and never wholly Christian, is the poet of the transition, and in his poetry the romantic attitude to Nature and the romantic attitude to woman both find expression. That note of tender affection, so rare in classical literature, appears both in the poem on the Moselle, written in A.D. 370 and in his exquisite tribute to his wife.

"Quis color ille vadis, seras cum propulit umbras
Hesperus et viridi perfudit monte Mosellam!
tota natant crispis juga motibus et tremit absens
pampinus et vitreis vindemia turget in undis."

"What colour are they now, thy quiet waters?
The evening star has brought the evening light,
And filled the river with the green hillside;
The hill-tops waver in the rippling water,
Trembles the absent vine and swells the grape
In thy clear crystal."

The poem to his wife begins:

"Uxor vivamus ut viximus et teneamus
nomina quæ primo sumpsimus in thalamo."

"Love, let us live as we lived, nor ever lose
The little names that were the first night's grace."

The translations which I have borrowed from Helen Waddel's fascinating *Medieval Latin Lyrics* are wholly true to the spirit of the original.

Christianity freed man from the limitations of an earth-bound humanism. The Gothic spire soaring upwards from the earth is the symbol of a new world outlook, a philosophy which helped to reconcile man to the thought of infinite time and infinite space. The Greek with his hatred of the *apeiron*, that which has no limits, would have hated the prospect of the far horizons seen from a mountain top, and was certainly repelled by the thought of the remote past. He left Troy buried beneath the sediment of the centuries, for Schliemann to excavate.

It is significant that this new feeling for far horizons, both in time and in space, should have manifested itself in the poetry of Petrarch, first of the sentimental mountaineers. "Petrarch," writes Spengler, "the fine collector of antiquities, coins and manuscripts, the very type of the historically sensitive man, viewing the distant past and scanning the distant prospect. Was he not the first to attempt an Alpine peak?"

Petrarch climbed Mont Ventoux in Provence on April 26th, 1335, and he described the ascent in an enthusiastic letter to his father. He enjoyed all the little incidents of a laborious climb, and revelled in the glorious panorama from the summit.

Petrarch (1304-1374) was a true pioneer, for though his great predecessor Dante (1265-1321) often mentions mountains, his mountain epithets, like Homer's sea epithets, are either purely factual or expressive of active dislike. Just as Homer alternates between writing of "over-arched waves" and the "dread gulfs of the barren sea," so Dante's mountain epithets express either hostility, as for example *maligno* (malignant) or indifference, e.g., *erto*, steep or *duro*, hard or *rotto*, broken.

Critics who are content with facile explanations attribute what they conceive to have been the mediæval attitude to mountains to the terror which mountains inspired among those who crossed the Alpine passes. Characteristic of this attitude is the letter written by the monk John de Bremble, who crossed the St. Bernard in 1178. "'Lord,' I said, 'restore me to my brethren that I may tell them that they come not to this place of torment' . . . where the marble pavement of the stony ground is ice alone, and you cannot set down a foot safely," but there is no necessary connection between the fear of Alpine travel, and the failure to discover beauty in those distant views of the Alps which can be seen from the security of the plains.

Admittedly if our evidence be confined to the written word it would be difficult to prove that mediæval man saw the beauty which we see in Monte Rosa "hanging there" beyond the Piedmont plain, in Mont Blanc from the shores of Lake Geneva or in the Oberland from the terrace at Berne, but the evidence of art qualifies the conclusions which seem to be imposed on us by mediæval literature.

Italy is as mountainous as Switzerland, and mountains appear in many mediæval paintings. The formal and conventional rocks in the work of Ghirlandajo, Pesellino or Mantegna corresponds to Dante's formal and conventional mountain epithets. Mountains are often featured because the scriptural scene depicted took place on or near a mountain. Duccio's *Transfiguration* in the National Gallery is a case in point. It is only too apparent that Duccio can never have studied a rock with interest or pleasure. Mountains are sometimes introduced to provide a suitable background for a gloomy scene. It is this motive, I suspect, rather than the fact that Mantegna had an exaggerated idea of the mountainous character of the Mount of Olives which explains the repulsive nightmare crags in Mantegna's *Agony in the Garden* (National Gallery).

"L'amore di qualunque cosa è figliuolo d'essa cognitione. L'amore è tanto più fervente, quanto la cognitione è più certa." But if it be true, as Leonardo wrote, that love is the daughter of knowledge, it is no less true that knowledge is the daughter of love. Where we find mountains, snow and hills painted with accuracy and understanding we can assume that the artist enjoyed looking at the mountains which he studied with such care. It has been suggested that the improvement in mountain painting was due to an improvement in technique, but though the technique of Mantegna, born in 1431, is far superior to that of Duccio, born in 1260, there is no corresponding improvement in the painting of mountains. There is a beautiful mountain background in Hubert Van Eyck's *Crucifixion* (Metropolitan Museum, New York), but Van Eyck was born in 1390, long before that rapid advance in technique which coincided with the Renaissance.

In our own National Gallery, the snowy hills seen through the open window in Lotto's portrait of the Protonotary Giulano, the mountain background to one of the Bellini Madonnas, and the mountains of storm in Titian's *Madonna with St. Catherine* all bear witness to a genuine feeling for the beauty of mountain

form and colour, a feeling which reached its climax in the sixteenth century and then began sharply to decline.

As was indeed inevitable, for in so far as the Renaissance was a return to the standards of Greek humanism, it necessarily involved a revival of the Greek attitude to nature.

My belief that mountain painting began to decline with the Renaissance was arrived at after studying mountain paintings in most of the great Galleries of Europe, and I am pleased to discover that I can cite in support of this conclusion the great authority of the late Lord Conway of Allington, better known to mountaineers as Sir Martin Conway. I happened by chance, to reread his book, *The Alps*, just as I was finishing this chapter, a book which I had last read as a boy of sixteen, with little or no interest in art.

"It is often forgotten," wrote Sir Martin Conway in *The Alps*, "that mountains and even snowy mountains found their way into pictures at a very early date. Even the father of modern landscape painting, Hubert Van Eyck, introduced admirable renderings of lines of snowy peaks into the backgrounds of some of his pictures, as, for instance, in the 'Three Maries at the Sepulchre,' belonging to Sir Frederic Cook, where the effect of a distant range is beautifully suggested. Albrecht Dürer again, about a century later, made a series of the carefulest studies of mountain scenes in the neighbourhood of the Brenner road, and thenceforward he was fond of introducing excellently-drawn peaks into the backgrounds of his engravings and woodcuts. He possessed a remarkable knowledge of the essential facts of mountain form, so that even a modern mountaineer can learn from his works some of the elements of 'how to see.' Well-drawn mountains are of frequent occurrence in sixteenth century wood-cuts and drawings by the prolific masters of sixteenth century south German and Venetian schools. The fact is one of many proofs of the vitality of that first outburst of mountain enthusiasm which gradually faded as the sixteenth century advanced.

"It is the commonplace of seventeenth and eighteenth century writers, who chance to refer to mountain scenery, to describe it as of monstrous, horrible or even hideous character. Contemporary artists gave it corresponding expression. We are wrong to assume that their pictures and prints manifest any incapacity to draw because we do not recognise in them the peaks and landscapes which we know."

On the other hand it is easy to recognise Mont Blanc, its attendant

peaks, and the Salève in a painting by Konrad Witz painted in 1444. The subject is the miraculous draught of fishes, but it is by the waters, not of Galilee but of Geneva, that St. Peter lays at the feet of our Lord "the net full of great fishes."

Mountain paintings improve as the influence of Renaissance ebbed. The reader can test this fact for himself by examining the illustrations reproduced in G. R. de Beer's *Early Travellers in the Alps*. Contrast for instance the engravings of the Rhone Glacier which face pages 124 and 128 respectively. In the former (circa 1720) the mountains are shapeless horrors, the glacier grotesque, but the latter (circa 1777) is an engraving which I should be glad to possess. In the same book there is a reproduction of an engraving of Engelberg (1777) in which the mountains and glaciers are reproduced with accuracy and charm.

The dawn of the Romantic Movement coincided with the development of the school of Swiss coloured prints, a school of which, perhaps, the great masters were the Lorys, father and son.

In addition to the evidence of art there is some literary evidence for what Conway called "the vitality of that first modern outburst of mountain enthusiasm which gradually faded out as the sixteenth century advanced."

Conrad Gesner was the first mountain lover to put on record a detailed apologia for mountaineering. He was born in 1516 and was a professor of philosophy at Zürich University for twenty-four years. He was in fact the prototype of the climbing Don. His few predecessors had belonged to the one man—one mountain school, but Gesner announced that he intended to climb at least one mountain a year. Fortunately the story of one of his climbs has survived, the ascent of Pilatus. Everything delighted him, the changing views, the summit panorama, the silence of the heights in which "One catches echoes of the harmony of the celestial spheres," the discipline of hardship and the joys of remembered toil and danger. Gesner indeed anticipates the apologetics for mountaineering which are to be found in the pages of *Peaks, Passes and Glaciers*.

Gesner's intimate friend, Professor Marti, of Berne, fully shared his mountain enthusiasm. He tells us that on the summit of the Stockhorn he discovered a Greek inscription cut into a stone which may be rendered: "The love of mountains is best." Of the Oberland, as seen from Berne, Marti writes: "These are

the mountains which form our pleasure and delight when we gaze at them from the highest parts of our city, and admire their mighty peaks and broken crags that threaten to fall at any moment. Who would not admire, love, willingly visit, explore and climb places of this sort? I should assuredly call those who are not attracted by them dolts, stupid dull fishes, and slow tortoises. I am never happier than on the mountain crests, and there are no wanderings dearer to one than those on the mountains."

Since Marti would scarcely have branded the overwhelming majority of his contemporaries as "dolts, stupid dull fishes, etc.," it is a reasonable assumption that the appreciation of mountain beauty was not uncommon in the sixteenth century, and this view is confirmed by the fact that Simler, who succeeded Gesner at Zürich and who wrote the first textbook on the technique of Alpine travel, tells us that foreigners came from all lands to marvel at the Alps.

The first English tribute to the beauty of mountains and the joys of mountain travel is the magnificent panegyric of an anonymous writer quoted in *Coryat's Crudities*, which was published in 1611.

"What I pray you is more pleasant, more delectable, and more acceptable unto a man than to behold the heighth of hilles, as it were the very Atlantes themselves of heauen? to admire *Hercules* his pillers, to see the mountaines Taurus and Caucasus? to view the hill Olympus, the seat of *Jupiter*? to passe ouer the Alpes that were broken by *Annibals* Vineger? to climbe up the Apennine promontory of Italy? from the hill Ida to behold the rising of the Sunne before the Sunne appeares? to visite Pernassus and Helicon, the most celebrated seates of the Muses? Neither indeed is their any hill or hillocke, which doth not containe in it the most sweete memory of worthy matters."

II

By the end of the eighteenth century the reaction against Gothic architecture was complete. The very word "Gothic" came into existence as an expression of contempt for an architectural style which the eighteenth century associated with Gothic barbarians. The eighteenth-century architects would have agreed with Ruskin in recognising a "mountain brotherhood between the cathedral and the Alp," but would have drawn very different conclusions from

Ruskin's premise. Mountains like Gothic cathedrals refused to conform to defined standards of taste. Gothic was an architecture of undisciplined genius. The Eighteenth century admired restraint and conformity to classic standards, the heroic couplets of Pope, the drama of Racine, the classical landscape as expressed in formal gardens, and in architecture, the accepted "recipes for beauty and sublimity" as formulated by writers who invoked Vitruvius to determine the exact proportions of the "five orders." Mountains were beyond the pale, for as Thomas Burnet pointed out in 1681, "they have neither Form nor Beauty nor Shape, nor Order . . . they do not consist of any Proportion of Parts that is referable to any Design, or that hath the least footsteps of Art or Counsel. There is nothing in Nature more shapeless and ill-figured than an old Rock or Mountain, and all that Variety that is among them, is but the various Modes of Irregularity."

Burnet offers us, however, one slight consolation. However ugly mountains may be, they cannot be as ugly as when first created.

" . . . 'Tis true they cannot look so ill now as they did at first ; a Ruin that is fresh, looks much worse than afterwards, when the Earth grows discoloured and skinn'd over. But I fancy, if we had seen the Mountains, when they were new born and raw, when the Earth was fresh broken, and the Waters of the Deluge newly retired, the Fractions and Confusions of them would have appeared very ghastly and frightful."

Gothic landscape like Gothic architecture had no "Proportion of Parts that is referable to any Design," and this was decisive for men of taste. Indeed many of Burnet's readers must have felt that he was labouring the obvious. Once mountains had been classified by implication with Gothic architecture all need for further discussion was at an end.

It would, for instance, never have occurred to Bishop Berkeley who crossed Mont Cenis on January 1st, 1714, and who was "out of humour by the most horrible precipices," that it was necessary to *prove* the self-evident axiom that Gothic architecture was uncouth and mountains repulsive.

Again there is no hint of irony or conscious humour in the confession which a certain John Spence records in 1730 : "I should like the Alps very much if it were not for the hills," and we may be sure that Goldsmith who complained that in Scotland "hills and rocks intercept every prospect" would have been genuinely startled

had he met an eccentric who could find beauty in a prospect even if it consisted of nothing but "hills and rocks."

Meanwhile theologians, pre-occupied with the problem of evil, did their best to discover the benefits which may justly be attributed to mountains. Samuel Johnson, for instance, implies that even the ugliness of the mountains has one negative advantage for the philosopher. They do not tempt him to distractions. "Before me and on either side," he writes of Glen Moriston, "were high hills, which by hindering the eye from ranging forced the mind to find entertainment in itself." "An eye accustomed," he continued, "to flowering pastures and waving harvests is astonished and repelled by this wide extent of hopeless sterility. The appearance is that of matter incapable of form or usefulness, dismissed by nature from her care, and disinherited of her favours, left in its original state, or quickened only with the sullen power of useless vegetation."

III

By the middle of the eighteenth century the creative energy of the Renaissance was exhausted and the reaction had already begun. Thomas Gray, the poet, in September, 1739, visited the Grande Chartreuse and wrote an enthusiastic description of the mountain scenery in the surroundings of the Convent "... one of the most solemn, the most romantic scenes I ever beheld," but the eighteenth century re-emerges in his dislike of Mont Cenis which "carries the permission mountains have of being frightful rather too far." Thirty years later Gray visited the English lakes, and the letter-journal which he wrote in October, 1769, helped to create a fashion.

The journal contains some effective and charming word-pictures. "... Saddleback, whose furrowed sides were gilt by the noon-day sun, whilst its brow appeared of a sad purple from the shadow of the clouds as they sailed slowly by it ... the shining purity of the lake reflecting rocks, woods, fields, and inverted tops of hills, just ruffled by the breeze, enough to show it is alive, with the white buildings of Keswick, Crosthwaite Church, and Skiddaw for a back ground at a distance. ... In the evening I walked down to the lake by the side of Crow-park after sunset, and saw the solemn colouring of night draw on, the last gleam of sunshine fading away on the hill-tops, the deep serene of the waters, and the long shadows of the mountains thrown across them, till they nearly touched the

hitherto shore. At a distance were heard the murmurs of many water falls, not audible in the day-time ; I wished for the moon, but she was dark to me and silent."

This belated discovery of our British mountains, two centuries after Gesner and Marti had drawn attention to the beauty of the Alps, was the symptom of a revolution in taste and of an incipient revolt against classical standards not only in landscape but also in architecture. And just as the dislike of Gothic architecture was invariably associated with a dislike of mountain scenery, so the Gothic Revival coincided with a revival of that mountain enthusiasm which, as Martin Conway said, "gradually faded out as the sixteenth century advanced." And where this newly discovered taste for Gothic was a mere pose, the admiration for mountains was equally affected. No one, of course, would expect a profound appreciation of Gothic from a man who could describe Gothic architecture as "magnificent and genteel," and it is to the coiner of this phrase, Horace Walpole, that we owe the enchanting absurdities of the pseudo-Gothic mansion which he erected at Strawberry Hill. Walpole, who regarded Gothic as an entertaining exotic, and who amused the modish world by his whimsical defence of the indefensible was, no doubt, as self-consciously eccentric in his praise of the Grande Chartreuse. ". . . all shagged with hanging woods, obscured with pines and lost in clouds ! . . . Sheets of cascade forcing their silver speed, and hasting into the roughened river at the bottom ! . . . This sounds too bombast and romantic for one that has not seen it, too cold for one that has. If I could send you my letter post between two lovely tempests that echoed each other's wrath, you might have some idea of this noble roaring scene."

The gulf that separates Walpole's dilettante patronage from Ruskin's profound passion for Gothic is no greater than the contrast between their respective attitudes to the mountains, but it is significant that the taste for Gothic should inevitably be allied with a taste for mountain scenery even in cases when neither admiration was rooted in sincerity. William Beckford for instance who instructed his architect Wyatt to design "an ornamental building which should have the appearance of a convent, be partly in ruins and yet contain some weatherproof compartments" also affected a great love for mountains. "Were I not," he wrote, "to see a genius or two sometimes, to go to Voltaire's sometimes, and to the mountains very often I should die."

IV

In politics as in architecture the romantic revolt against classical convention was associated with the new mountain cult. "If Rousseau were tried," wrote Leslie Stephen, "for the crime of setting up mountains as objects of human worship, he would be convicted by an impartial jury," but the Judge in passing sentence would give due consideration to the fact that Rousseau himself was never converted to the Faith which he preached with such success. Rousseau's mountain worship was an ideological deduction from his political philosophy, and his philosophy in turn was influenced by Haller's poem on the Alps. Haller was a distinguished Swiss physiologist and in his poem, published in 1728, was a panegyric of the virtues of the Alpine peasant, uncorrupted by ambition and uninfected by avarice.

The first chapter of Rousseau's *Social Contract* opens with the famous sentence "L'homme est né libre, et partout il est dans les fers." "Man is born free and is everywhere in chains." In his *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality* Rousseau contrasts the happiness and virtue of man in a primitive state of nature with man as degraded by civilisation. Voltaire acknowledged a presentation copy of this book with a characteristic pleasantry. "I have received your new book against the human race, and thank you for it. Never was such cleverness used to prove us all stupid. One longs, in reading your book, to walk on all fours. But as I have lost that habit for more than sixty years I feel, unhappily, the impossibility of resuming it."

The idealisation of man in a state of nature led by a natural transition to the idealisation of the Alpine peasant, and thence to the idealisation of the peasant's Alpine environment. Rousseau's encounters with Alpine peasants were as infrequent as those of Housman with Shropshire lads, and he took no risks of exposing his sympathy with the mountains to any coarse contacts with reality. His real sentiments about mountains emerge in the contrast which his hero St. Preux implies between the charming and luxuriant Pay de Vaud shores of Lake Lemman and the barren heights which rise from the Savoy shore. Rousseau's love of rocks, writes Leslie Stephen, "may be a particular case of his love of paradox. He admires them, we may fancy, precisely because they are hideous; the mountains, like the noble savage, are a standing

protest against the sophisticated modern taste ; they are bare and wild and repulsive, but at any rate they have not taken to wearing wigs and stays and submitted to the conventional taste of the century. To love them is a proof of a singular independence of character, which is admirable because it is eccentric."

Leonardo's maxim cannot be applied to Rousseau's love of the mountains. In his case "*l'amore*" was *not* "*figliuolo d'essa cognitione. . .*" Rousseau was only interested in the mountains of ideology. He was born in Geneva, but never once in all his writings does he mention the Salève or the distant view of Mont Blanc from the southern shores of Lake Geneva. He spent a great deal of time at Vevey, but never refers to the Dent du Midi. He knew Maggiore, but never alludes to Monte Rosa which is visible from the southern reaches of the lake. Rousseau, as Dr. Engel remarks, "neither knew nor loved the Alps."

The publication of Rousseau's *Nouvelle Héloïse* in 1760 made innumerable converts to the mountain cult, but the arch-prophet of this new Faith neither embraced nor practised the religion which he preached with such apparent sincerity. But then Rousseau was not of those pedants who are harassed by the need to reconcile their preaching and their practice. He wrote with great feeling on the responsibilities of parenthood, urged fashionable mothers to suckle their young, and deposited his own five children in a Foundling's hospital, a practice which provoked Burke's famous epigram :—"lover of his kind and a hater of his kindred. . . . Benevolence to the whole species and want of feeling for every individual with whom the professors come into contact, form the characteristic of the new philosophy." Benevolence to mountains in general and a want of feeling for every individual mountain was the principal characteristic of Rousseau's mountain-cult.

V

In religion, as in art and politics, the revolt against classicism was associated with the discovery of mountain beauty.

Eighteenth-century Anglicanism was severely classical in its characteristics. It steered a judicious middle course between Popery and Dissent, and avoided—in the words of a seventeenth-century divine—"the meretricious gaudiness of the Church of Rome and the squalid sluttishness of fanatic conventicles." In his

distrust of undisciplined emotionalism the eighteenth-century Anglican was more influenced than he suspected by classical ideals of restraint and order. "The pretending to extraordinary revelations and gifts of the Holy Ghost," said the great Bishop Butler, "is a horrid thing—a very horrid thing."

Methodism, a quasi-Gothic revolt against the formalism of the State Church, was one of the forces which prepared the ground for the Romantic movement. Dr. Leger, a brilliant French critic of John Wesley, comments on "la filiation spirituelle du Mouvement Oxford avec John Wesley" and Miss Sheila Kaye-Smith attributes the Anglo-Catholic movement to the joint effect of the Evangelical Revival and the Romantic movement.

Of the Wesley hymns, Dr. Leger writes, "The smooth correct, regular, heroic couplet of Pope and his schools is superseded by endlessly varied combination of metre and stanzas; lines freely encroach on each other; verse and language strive to picture the manifold impulses of the soul, the vehement rush of religious emotions . . . a new kind of poetry here rises before us, instinct with a more ardent flame, alive to every pulse of individual sensibility: the truly lyrical poetry. To this degree Methodism did perhaps pave the way for romanticism in literature."

Though John Wesley anticipated that aspect of the Romantic movement with which we are specially concerned, no historian of mountains and their influence on man has ever drawn attention to Wesley's appreciative allusions to our own British mountains in his famous Journal. Thus after a reference to the "gently rising mountains of Monmouthshire," he continues, "Carmarthenshire, into which we came soon afterwards, has at least as fruitful a soil but it is not so pleasant because it has fewer mountains." And elsewhere he insists that the Creator is "a God both of the hills and valleys and nowhere more present than in the mountains of Cumberland."

Institutional religion was fighting a rearguard action in the eighteenth century. It was "an agreed point," wrote Bishop Butler, "that Christianity should be set up as the principal subject of mirth and ridicule," but man cannot rest content for long with negations. The inevitable reaction against the sober Anglicanism of the century took the form of Methodism and, later, of the Oxford movement. The no less inevitable reaction against the scepticism of the century found expression in the pantheistic, or rather

panentheistic nature-worship of which Wordsworth was the most distinguished exponent. These varied reactions were all connected with the new attitude to mountains. The Gothic revival, the discovery of mountain beauty and the Oxford movement were indeed different aspects of the same Romantic movement.

CHAPTER IV

ENGLISHMEN IN SWITZERLAND (17TH AND 18TH CENTURIES)

I

LIFE is a choice of sacrifices, and few indeed are the gains that do not involve some corresponding loss. The discovery of mountain beauty is responsible for what Frederic Harrison has described as "the superstition that glaciers and snow-peaks are the only things in the Alps worth coming to see." Before the dawn of the Romantic movement English travellers were at least as interested in, and in some cases even more interested in the Swiss people than in the Swiss mountains. To them, as to Europe in general, the most surprising thing about Switzerland was the miracle of its survival. The successful resistance of the young Confederation to the attacks of Austria provoked as much astonishment in the fourteenth century as did the successful resistance of Great Britain in 1940 after the collapse of France.

The Swiss Confederation was born on August 1st, 1291. On that date Uri, Schwyz and Unterwalden, three of the four Forest Cantons from which the Vierwaldstättersee, popularly known as Lake Lucerne, takes its name, concluded a perpetual league. The young Confederation successfully defeated the Habsburgs in the three battles of Morgarten, 1315, Sempach, 1386, and Näfels, 1388.

"These surprising victories," wrote Archdeacon Coxe in 1776, "gained by a handful of men against an enemy so much superior in number render the wonderful combats of Marathon and Plataea perfectly credible. The same love of independence, the same dread of slavery, and the same attachment to their country, animated the respective nations to the same deeds of heroism. I saw near the village of Naefels several stones, with no other inscription than 1388 : an inscription which no more requires explanation to an inhabitant of the canton, than the glorious era of 1688, to an Englishman."

The pattern of these victories against Austria in the second of which Duke Leopold III of Austria lost his life, was repeated in the three battles between the Swiss and Charles the Bold of Burgundy. The Duke was defeated at Grandson, near Neuchâtel in February, 1476, and again at Morat in June, 1476 ; and lost his life in the

battle of Nancy where the Swiss, fighting in alliance with the Duke of Lorraine, inflicted a final and crushing defeat on the forces of Burgundy.

The peasant democracies of Switzerland gained their victories at a time when the great peasant revolts of England and France had met with crushing defeats. In Switzerland the peasants and burghers gradually took control. In 1499, Maximilian of Austria enumerated more than two hundred seats of the nobility, the rightful owners of which had been expelled by the Swiss. "The Swiss," wrote Professor Oechsli, "were regarded as the born 'suppressors and exterminators of all the nobility.' The wars between them and the house of Austria were, in addition, fierce class struggles between burghers and peasants, on the one side, and nobles on the other."

The social levelling achieved by the Swiss led inevitably to the complete emancipation of serfs in Swiss territory. North of the Rhine, on the other hand, serfdom was becoming more burdensome. The teutonic liberties so gallantly defended on the shores of Lake Lucerne were being trampled underfoot in Germany. In Germany the monarchical principle was in the ascendant, and the Leagues of the Swabian Cities and of the Rhine were being crushed. In Switzerland the republican principle was strengthened by trial. As time passed the two Germanic nations grew apart, never again to be united. The Swiss of the fourteenth century as an American writer, Mr. W. D. McCrackan, remarks, "rescued the principle of primitive democracy . . . just at the critical moment when it was threatened with extinction."

The Swiss were the first to realise that a democracy involves the universal duty to bear arms, a duty which the English-speaking democracies only reluctantly accept during or on the eve of war. It is interesting to note that the phrase "A People's Army" which belongs to the controversial terminology of modern politics was first applied by Machiavelli to the Swiss.

In Eastern as in Central Switzerland independence was wrested from Austria in hard-fought battles. In 1498 the Grisons formed a perpetual alliance with the seven easternmost Cantons of the Swiss Confederation, and thereby precipitated a conflict with Emperor Maximilian of Austria. Once before when the Emperor had threatened to invade Switzerland, the Bürgermeister of Zürich had remarked, "Gracious lord, I should not advise you to do this. We have so ignorant and rustic a populace that I fear they would not

even spare the Imperial crown." The Emperor did not take his advice and the Imperial forces suffered a crushing defeat at Calven, and were subsequently forced to retreat after an abortive invasion of the Engadine, which failed because the Rhätians, in pursuance of a "scorched earth" policy, burnt in succession Zuoz, Samaden, Pontresina and St. Moritz. On September 22nd, 1499, Maximilian concluded a peace at Basel which, in effect, if not in words, conceded the practical separation of Switzerland from the Empire.

As a result of these victories, the military prestige of the Swiss stood so high that Henry VIII sent Richard Pace to Zürich to negotiate an alliance with the Swiss League, and though this attempt failed, the Reformation created a spiritual alliance between Britain and the Protestant Cantons. Many distinguished refugees from the Marian persecutions found asylum in Switzerland.

During the reign of Elizabeth, who presented a goblet to Bullinger, now in the Swiss National Museum, there was a constant interchange of letters between English bishops and statesmen and the Swiss reformers. John Knox, a disciple of Calvin, was responsible for the Calvinistic character of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland.

In the Anglo-Dutch Naval war the Protestant Cantons intervened with good effect. They drew the attention of both belligerents to the scandal provoked by this internecine struggle between two great Protestant Powers, and sent the Town Clerk of Schaffhausen to lay before Oliver Cromwell in London their proposals for mediation. In the Peace Treaty of 1654 the good offices of the Protestant Cantons were recognised, and they were named as arbitrators for disputed points.

The importance which Anglicans attached to Swiss Protestantism emerges very clearly in the letters written by Gilbert Burnet, afterwards Bishop of Salisbury. The Bishop whose Swiss travels took place in 1685 and 1686 could scarcely have been less interested in mountains. He contents himself with one bleak reference to Mont Blanc which he describes "One Hill not far from Geneva, call'd Maudit," and quotes the authority of "an incomparable Mathematician" for the erroneous statement that Mont Blanc is "two Miles of perpendicular Height," a statement which is approximately two-thirds of the truth. Burnet's book is as representative of the seventeenth-century traveller as Mummery's *My Climbs in the Alps and Caucasus* is of the nineteenth century. Burnet's lack of interest in the mountains is only equalled by Mummery's lack of interest in

their political and religious background, which Burnet describes in such detail.

The prestige which Swiss Protestantism enjoyed in England was the indirect cause of Edward Gibbon's first contact with Lausanne. As an undergraduate at Oxford, Gibbon had been converted to Catholicism. His indignant father packed him off to Lausanne and entrusted him to the spiritual care of M. Pavilliard, a Calvinistic Minister. Gibbon liked his host and disliked his hostess. He resented her "unclean avarice" and her "coarse and homely table." The effect of Pavilliard's exposure of the doctrinal errors of Rome was reinforced by what Gibbon regarded as a tactical error on the part of the Roman organisation. Gibbon, like other people who have had little contact with the Church of Rome, never questioned the legend of Rome's superb organisation. "I have since," he writes, "reflected with surprise that as the Romish clergy of every part of Europe maintain a close correspondence with each other, they never attempted, by letters or messages, to rescue me from the hands of the heretics, or at least to confirm my zeal and constancy in the profession of the faith."

Gibbon, cured of the Roman fever, promptly contracted a more common ailment. He fell in love with Susan Curchod, the daughter of the minister of Crassier. Once again Gibbon's father intervened with decisive results. Gibbon's epitaph on his Helvetian romance, "I sighed as a lover, I obeyed as a son," will be read by twentieth century fathers with nostalgic regrets for the vanished *patria potestas*.

Susan, daughter of an obscure clergyman, would seem to have been predestined to marry a celebrity. After she had been jilted by the faint-hearted historian, she married Necker, the famous Minister of Finance under Louis XVI.

After the outbreak of the Revolution the Neckers retired to their Chateau at Coppet, in which their daughter Madame de Staël was to entertain Byron many years later. Gibbon was a frequent visitor to Coppet, for as Augustine Birrell remarked, "of all the wrongs women suffer at the hands of men, not marrying them is the one which they find easiest to forgive." Certainly Mme. Necker forgave. "Come back to us when you are free." One of her letters ends, "The moment of your leisure ought always to belong to her who has been your first love and your last. I cannot make up my mind which of these titles is the sweeter and the dearer to my heart."

Gibbon returned to England in 1758. A Society can be judged

by the standards which it takes for granted. England was at war with France but Gibbon applied, as a matter of course, for permission to travel through French territory.

"The resentment of the French," writes Gibbon, "at our taking their ships without a declaration," (of war) "had rendered that polite nation somewhat peevish and difficult. They denied a passage to English travellers."

Gibbon could not resign himself to the toilsome route through Germany, and travelled through France, with borrowed papers, as the alleged Swiss companion of two Swiss officers. I commend this episode to those who still cherish the odd illusion that the world is actually improving, an illusion which is not shared by our great Prime Minister, to judge from a passage in his "Life" of the great Duke of Marlborough. After quoting a Royal Proclamation at the outbreak of war to the effect that enemy subjects "who shall demean themselves dutifully to us shall be safe in their persons and estates," Mr. Churchill continues with gentle irony. "This passage will jar on the modern mind. We see how strong was the structure of Christendom in those times, and with what restraints even warring nations acted. Of course nowadays with the many improvements that have been made in international morals and behaviour all enemy subjects . . . as in every other state based on an educated democracy, would be treated within twenty-four hours as malignant foes, flung into internment camps, and their private property stolen to assist the expenses of war. In the twentieth century mankind has shaken itself free from all those illogical, old-world prejudices, and achieved the highest efficiency of brutal, ruthless war." And Mr. Churchill proceeds to give other examples of "archaic doctrine," the inevitable armistice at the end of battle to rescue the wounded "instead of leaving them to perish inch by inch in agony in No Man's Land," the courtesies extended to the enemy, passports to traverse hostile territory by the shortest routes home ". . . no hatred, apart from military antagonism was countenanced . . . mob violence and mechanical propaganda has not yet been admitted to the adjustments of International disputes."

By way of contrast let us note that after the occupation of Vichy France the Germans refused transit-visas even to British diplomatists accredited to the Berne Legation. To-day (January 15th, 1944) Switzerland is more inaccessible to Englishmen than Thibet to Gibbon's contemporaries.

The courtesies to which Mr. Churchill draws attention were the consequence not only of a Christian, but also of an aristocratic tradition, and were the outcome of the code of chivalry which regulated combats between knights both in the Tournay and in battle. Modern totalitarian war begins with the French Revolution—which was a revolt not only against aristocracy but also against Christianity, a revolt in the course of which, as Burke complained, the Jacobins destroyed “that mode of civilised war which, more than anything else, has distinguished the Christian religion.”

In 1783 Gibbon returned to Lausanne and made his home for the rest of his life. “Our importance in society,” he writes, “is less a positive than a relative weight: in London I was lost in the crowd; I ranked with the first families of Lausanne, and my style of prudent expense enabled me to maintain a fair balance of reciprocal civilities. . . . Lausanne is peopled by a numerous gentry, whose companionable idleness is seldom disturbed by the pursuits of avarice or ambition.”

It was in Lausanne that Gibbon completed *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. “It was on the day, or rather night, of the 27th of June, 1787, between the hours of eleven and twelve, that I wrote the last lines of the last page, in a summer house in my garden. After laying down my pen, I took several turns in a berceau, or covered walk of the acacias, which commands a prospect of the country, the lake, and the mountains. The air was temperate, the sky was serene, the silver orb of the moon was reflected from the waters, and all nature was silent. I will not dissemble the first emotions of joy on recovery of my freedom, and, perhaps, the establishment of my fame. But my pride was soon humbled, and a sober melancholy was spread over my mind, by the idea that I had taken an everlasting leave of an old and agreeable companion, and that whatsoever might be the future fate of my History, the life of the historian must be short and precarious.”

It is curious to reflect that, but for his indifferent knowledge of German, Gibbon might never have written his famous history. “There is one (theme),” he wrote in 1762, “which I should prefer to all others. *The History of the Liberty of the Swiss*, of that independence which a brave people rescued from the House of Austria, defended against a Dauphin of France, and finally sealed with the blood of Charles of Burgundy.” David Hume praised the first

chapter of this history. "Your History in my opinion, is written with spirit and judgement, and I exhort you very earnestly to continue it." Other critics were less encouraging with the result that Gibbon chose as his subject not the Rise of Switzerland but the Decline of Rome.

Gibbon tells us that in 1755 "the fashion of climbing the mountains and reviewing the Glaciers had not yet been introduced by foreign travellers." Before that date it was still regarded as a notable adventure to visit the glaciers of Grindelwald or Chamonix. William Burnet, for instance, son of the Bishop, visited the Grindelwald glaciers in 1708, and made a careful report to the Royal Society. In 1741 Windham, an adventurous young Englishman, described an expedition to Chamonix and the Montanvers in a letter, which attracted considerable attention. The dividing line which separates these isolated journeys from the beginnings of the tourist invasion must be placed somewhere about 1760, the year in which De Saussure visited Chamonix. The publication of the *Nouvelle Héloïse* in 1760 was one of the chief causes of the change; another was the Treaty of Paris, which restored peace after the Seven Years War. In 1783 Gibbon, who had then settled in Lausanne, complains that "the fashion of viewing the mountains and Glaciers, has opened us on all sides to the incursions of foreigners." "We may say, then," writes Leslie Stephen, "that before the turning-point of the eighteenth century a civilised being might, if he pleased, regard the Alps with unmitigated horror. After it, even a solid archdeacon, with a firm belief in the British constitution, and Church and State, was compelled to admire, under penalty of general reprobation. It required as much originality to dislike as it had previously required to admire."

Leslie Stephen is less than just to Archdeacon William Coxe, whose only concession to the new fashion is the diffident "Dare I confess" with which he introduces his admission that he was "somewhat disappointed in the Grindelwald glaciers." The candour with which he records his dissent from the fashionable admiration of glaciers entitles him to be credited with sincerity in the many passages in which he writes with enthusiasm of Alpine scenery. The note of spontaneous and unforced delight is very marked in his description of Engelberg. "Having issued from the dark forest, we descended for a little way, and unanimously broke into an exclamation of surprise and delight, as we suddenly looked

down upon a picturesque plain of an oval shape beautifully wooded, watered by several lively streams, enclosed within a circle of gentle hills, and terminated by a majestic amphitheatre of 'cloud-capt alps.'"

Dr. Engel is even more contemptuous than Leslie Stephen. She describes Coxe as "doué d'un bon sens pesant, privé du tout pittoresque. . . . Son livre reste honorablement ennuyeux. . . . C'est un travail plein de bon sens et totalement dépourvu d'idées. Il méritait un enterrement décent sur les rayons des bibliothèques."

On the other hand my friend Professor L. B. Namier, perhaps the leading authority on English politics in the eighteenth century, tells me that Coxe's Memoirs, such as his Memoirs of the great Duke of Marlborough and Horace Walpole, are of great historical value, and that no historian, until recent times, had access to a greater range of unpublished documents and family archives. A member of the famous De Salis family spoke to me in terms of high praise of Coxe's chapters on the Grisons and, in particular, of his scholarly discussion of the Romansch language.

The Stephen-Engel portrait of Coxe as a worthy and unenterprising Archdeacon does not accord with the facts of his career. At a time when travelling was neither safe nor comfortable, he he travelled extensively in Russia, in Sweden and in Denmark and paid four prolonged visits to Switzerland in the year 1776, 1779, 1785 and 1786.

The Switzerland through which Coxe travelled was a Confederation of thirteen Cantons:—Uri, Schwyz, Unterwalden, Lucerne, Zug, Zürich, Glarus, Bern (together forming the so-called eight old Cantons) and in addition, Appenzel, Fribourg, Solothurn, Basel and Schaffhausen. This Confederation ruled over various subject territories and bailiwicks. Morat and Grandson, for instance, were held jointly by Bern and Fribourg. The Confederation was allied to independent States, which subsequently became Cantons of the Confederation. In practice there was very little difference between the relations of one Confederate Canton with another, and the relations of a Confederate Canton with the allied States, such as the Grisons, Valais, Neuchâtel, and Geneva. The links between Protestant Bern and Catholic Lucerne were no stronger than between Protestant Zürich and the independent State of the Grisons, which was mainly Protestant, for the Confederate Cantons were, in effect, autonomous States. There was no Federal Army.

Each Canton had its own militia, its own customs and its own currency. The difficulties of travel were still further aggravated by the fact that the rate of exchange in some Cantons varied with the amount exchanged. In some cases Confederate Cantons waged war on each other, as for example, Protestant Zürich and Bern against the Five Catholic Cantons in 1712. Sometimes one group of Cantons would form a separate alliance, as for instance the alliance in 1715 of the Catholic Cantons with Louis XIV. But in spite of these divergent interests a growing sense of Swiss solidarity developed through the centuries, the conviction of the imperative necessity of a defensive union, not only between the Confederate Cantons but also between the Confederation and the independent States.

"I have often considered with a great deal of pleasure," wrote Addison, "the profound Peace and Tranquillity that reigns in *Switzerland* and its Alliances. It is very wonderful to see such a Knot of Governments which are so divided among themselves in Matters of Religion, maintain so uninterrupted an Union and Correspondence, that no one of them is for invading the Rights of another, but remains content within the Bounds of its first Establishment. This, I think, must be chiefly ascribed to the Nature of the People and the Constitution of their Governments . . . as the inhabitants of these Countries, are naturally of a heavy phlegmatick Temper, if any of their leading Members have more Fire and Spirit than comes to their Share, it is quickly tempered by the Coldness and Moderation of the rest who sit at the Helm with them. . . . Geneva is much politer than *Switzerland*, or any of its Allies, and is therefore looked upon as the Court of the *Alps*, whither the Protestant Cantons often send their Children to improve themselves in Language and Education. The Genevois have been much refined, or, as others will have it, corrupted by the Conversation of the *French* Protestants, who make up almost a Third of their People. . . ."

The Swiss Confederation and allied States presented a bewildering mosaic of varied forms of government. The pure democracy of the *Landesgemeinde* still survived in the old Catholic rural Cantons where laws were enacted and alliances approved by the entire adult population, but elsewhere there had been a gradual decline of democratic institutions. "Even the Reformation," writes Mrs. Lina Hug, a Swiss Protestant, "led the way to this decline by

lodging all power, political, fiscal, moral and educational in the hands of governments." Zürich was governed by a guild aristocracy, Protestant Bern and Catholic Lucerne and Fribourg by patrician aristocracies.

Even so the democratic spirit was alive enough to provoke the lively interest of Archdeacon Coxé. Coxé was an uncompromising Whig, and as such was equally hostile to despotism and democracy. Few people realise that even in the eighteen-sixties Liberals were still anxious to defend themselves against the charge of *favouring* democracy. When Mr. Gladstone introduced his Bill for extending the franchise in 1866, he was careful to *deny* any democratic bias. "You will exclaim," he protested, "that 'this is democracy.' I reply that it is no such thing." Archdeacon Coxé was a firm believer in the Whig principle of a limited monarchy and a limited franchise, confined to men of property. He was surprised to discover, and candid enough to concede, that the democratic Cantons were well governed. "These little states, notwithstanding the natural defects of a democratical constitution may justly claim a large share of our approbation." But he is careful to point out that "it is only in these small republics, and in such a state of society that this kind of general democracy can have place." "Those theorists," he elsewhere remarks, "who are so anxious to reform the English House of Commons by transferring to *the people at large* the election of their representatives in parliament, might, on examining with attention the features of the Grison diet, fondly imagine that an *annual* assembly, in the choice of whose members, *every male* of the state should have a vote, and which, in all material occurrences should be liable *to be directed by its constituents*, must *necessarily* be the purest factuary of general freedom." He hastens to explain that the mischievous results of pure democracy are mitigated by corruption and aristocratical influence and adds, "If therefore corruption and aristocratical influence alone diminish factions and prevent anarchy in so poor a country as that of the Grisons, and in a republic scarcely known among the nations of Europe; to what a dreadful excess must the same evils prevail, if the *same* mode of electing and giving instructions to, members of Parliament subsisted in a kingdom like England; where riches and luxury are continually advancing with such rapid strides."

In religion as in politics the Archdeacon was all for the *Via Media*, between despotism and democracy in politics, and between

Papal sovereignty and Nonconformist anarchy in religion. Unfortunately he never met on his travels any Protestants who reminded him of those urbane and balanced ecclesiastics, without whose sermons, bound in finely-tooled calf, no gentleman's library was considered complete. On the other hand he sometimes met Protestants who were only too distressingly like the Methodists. There was, for instance, the clergyman whom he met at St. Moritz. "From the account given by the clergyman, who evidently leaned towards their opinions, these Pietists appear similar to our Methodists : for instance, they exalt faith above good works, affect to be uncommonly rigid and pious, condemn all diversions, card-playing, and assemblies, as criminal ; frequently despair of their salvation, fancy visions, enjoy supernatural inward illuminations, and employ so much time in prayer as to neglect their ordinary business."

In the chapters which describe his travels through the Catholic Cantons he makes the usual observations about "Romish superstition," but he seems to have found the Abbot of Engelberg more congenial than the St. Moritz Pietist. True he was a little surprised to find himself dining at the same table as his servants. "The company at table consisted of the Abbot, five or six Benedictines, ourselves, and our servants, who, according to the custom of the place, sat down at the same hospitable board as their masters. This intermixture of society, the politeness of the worthy abbot, and the facetious cheerfulness of one among the fathers, rendered the repast as agreeable as it was uncommon." Coxe seems to have been more surprised than displeased by this survival of a Feudalism which while maintaining distinctions of Office, permitted a far easier social intercourse between people of different rank than Hanoverian England, where the lines of division between rich and poor were infinitely more rigid than they had ever been in the old Europe.

It would be a great mistake to discount the historical value of Coxe's book merely because his turn of phrase often provokes a smile. His views were those of his time, and it is just conceivable that some contemporary ecclesiastics may appear almost as quaint to our descendants as the anti-democratic Archdeacon does to us. Archdeacon Coxe disliked dissenters and distrusted democracy, but a man may be a shrewd observer of the contemporary scene even if

he expresses the prejudices of his day in the phraseology of his age. The deferential tone which he adopted to his noble patrons was imposed on him by the conventions of his age, and conventions, as we know, change more rapidly than human nature for, as Aristotle remarked, "The behaviour of a courtier is much the same whether he be paying court to a tyrant or to King Demos."

II

There is a wide measure of agreement in the attitude of English travellers to their Swiss hosts. John Ray, the distinguished naturalist, travelled through Switzerland in 1665. The Swiss, he says, are so honest that "one may travel their countrey with a bag of gold in his hand," but the most charming tribute to the Swiss, to which de Beer called my attention, comes from the pen of James Hutton, the founder of the Moravian Missions in England. "The Lord loves Switzerland and will save many who might not be suitable for the congregation."

The prosperity of the Swiss compared to the inhabitants of Italy and France is a point on which many travellers comment. Italy and France, wrote Bishop Burnet, in spite of incomparably greater natural resources are "almost quite dispeopled. . . . On the contrary *Switzerland* is extremely full of People, and in several places, in the Villages as well as in their Towns, one sees all the Marks he can look for of Plenty and Wealth ; their Houses and Windows are in good Case, the Highways are well maintained, all People are well clothed, and every one lives at his Ease."

Coxe contrasts the Swiss and Milanese shores of Lake Lugano. "From Porto the traveller may observe, with satisfaction mingled with compassion, the strong contrasts effected by the influence of a free and an arbitrary government : the borders of the lake subject to Switzerland studded with a succession of villages, houses, and gardens ; this part of the Milanese desolate and almost unpeopled."

In spite of the decline of democracy, the egalitarian atmosphere of Switzerland impressed all observers. Even in Cantons where the government was in the hands of a small ruling class, the Swiss still persisted in behaving like the free citizens of a free republic. An egalitarianism of manner, if not of rank or legal rights still survived.

"Nothing delights me so much," writes Coxe, "as the inside of a Swiss cottage : all those I have hitherto visited, convey the liveliest

image of cleanliness, ease, and simplicity ; and cannot but strongly impress upon the observer a most pleasing conviction of the peasants' happiness. If I had never seen these little democratical states, I could have formed no idea of the general equality and indistinction that prevails among the inhabitants. Our host is an open-hearted, honest Swiss : he brings his pint of wine, sits down to table with us, and chats without the least ceremony. There is a certain forwardness of this kind which is insupportable when it apparently is the effect of impertinent curiosity, or fawning officiousness ; but the present instance of frank familiarity, arising from a mind conscious of its natural equality, and unconstrained by arbitrary distinctions, is highly pleasing."

III

Dr. Claire-Elaine Engel in her erudite and well documented work *La Littérature Alpine en France et en Angleterre aux xviii^e et xix^e siècles*, draws a most interesting contrast between the respective contributions of the English and of her own compatriots to the early literature of Swiss travel. She attributes the poor quality of most of the French Alpine literature to the mischievous influence of Rousseau.

The English travellers, who committed their impressions of Switzerland and the Swiss to paper, described the Swiss as they saw them, unhampered by any preconceived views of the ennobling influence of primitive surroundings on Alpine peasants. Their approach was realistic. They appreciated the virtues of the Swiss, but were as free with criticism as with praise.

The French, on the other hand, in so far as they were disciples of Rousseau, were not in the least interested in the real Swiss. They looked at the mountains and the mountain people through the spectacles of Rousseau's hero, Saint-Preux. They crossed the Swiss frontier determined to discover the survivors of the Golden Age living lives of uncorrupted simplicity among the Swiss mountains. Let Dr. Engel describe the result :—

"A kind of disgust and weariness of Society life began to make itself felt. These strangers who, often sincerely, were seeking some cure for their moral weariness, were impressed by the simple existence of the natives of Alpine valleys."

The inevitable result was a stereotyped literature equally devoid of sincerity and originality. "Travellers, poets, philosophers, one

and all were content to amplify Rousseau's phrases, without modifying their dull impersonality. All these descriptions in prose or in verse—excepting perhaps those of Chénier—are practically interchangeable."

"Such was the result of the *Nouvelle Héloïse*. Neither the travellers, nor the poets nor even the painters had really looked at the scenery. Rousseau's Novel had served them as a substitute for inspiration and imagination. They had superimposed a paradox on that old hatred for the mountains, which was far from extinct, a paradox of the idylls with which they embellished the mountain slopes. Rousseau had simultaneously formed and falsified the literary aspect of the mountains. One had all but reached a dead end. For long, and in a sense for ever, Saint-Preux and the Valaisian peasants were to conceal the Alps."

There were of course mountain travellers, notably De Saussure, who were uninfluenced by Rousseau, and who were realistic in their approach both to the mountains and to the mountain people, but the contrast, so often drawn, between the realistic and logical French and the romantic English is certainly inapplicable to their respective contributions to the literature of Alpine travel.

Rousseau's sentimental sociology made few converts in England, and the ever increasing stream of lakeland visitors were not in search of survivors from the Golden Age. "Towards 1789," writes Dr. Engel, "England had created without manifestos or sociology an authentic literature of the mountains . . . richer in original thought than the sudden and superficial enthusiasms inspired by Rousseau's Novel."

CHAPTER V

ANGLO-SWISS RELATIONS DURING AND AFTER THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

I

SOMEWHERE between Grindelwald and Lauterbrunnen, a young Englishman was writing a letter to his sister. He was twenty years of age and the date was September 14th, 1790.

"My partiality to Switzerland, excited by its natural charms, induces me to hope that the manners of the inhabitants are amiable ; but at the same time I cannot help contrasting them with those of the French, and as far as I have had the opportunity to observe, they lose very much by the comparison. We not only found the French a much less imposing people, but that politeness diffused through the lowest ranks had an air so engaging that you could scarce attribute it to any other cause than real benevolence. During the time—which was near a month—that we were in France, we had not once to complain of the slightest deficiency of courtesy in any person much less of any positive rudeness. We had also perpetual occasion to observe that cheerfulness and sprightliness for which the French have always been remarkable, but I must remind you that we crossed it at the time when the whole nation was mad with joy in consequence of the revolution."

Every revolution opens, as the great Basle historian Burckhardt drily remarks, "with the brilliant farce of hope." Young men of talent usually sympathise with revolutions, for it is only when we have had experience of life that we cease to equate the overthrow of a corrupt government with the overthrow of corruption. "Individuals and masses," to quote Burckhardt once again, "attribute everything that irks them to the existing dispensation, while for the most part what they are suffering under is inherent in human nature," which reads like an echo of Aristotle : "The evils of which men complain are not due to the rejection of Socialism but to the wickedness of man."

The political rebel is often an æsthetic rebel. Wordsworth was not the only heretic who combined a love for the mountains, condemned by orthodox canons of taste, with enthusiastic support of the French Revolution. This association between the mountain heresy and revolutionary sentiments is, indeed, part

of the indictment which Chateaubriand brings against the disciples of the mountain cult. Chateaubriand, that eloquent apologist for religious and political orthodoxy, proves to his complete satisfaction that mountains have neither form nor beauty, and adds as a rider that the sentimental ravings about mountain scenery are exactly what we might expect from such an unbalanced prophet of subversive ideas as Rousseau.

Chateaubriand could have reinforced his argument by citing Madame Roland, Chénier the poet, both of whom visited the Oberland, and Ramond de Carbonnière, pioneer of the Pyrenees, and conqueror of Mont Perdu. Madame Roland, Chénier and Ramond had a very genuine feeling for the mountains, and a no less genuine sympathy with the Revolutionary movement. Chénier and Madame Roland were executed. "Oh, Liberty, how you have been fooled!" were the last words spoken by Madame Roland on the scaffold. Ramond, who was imprisoned, was lucky to escape with his life.

Wordsworth returned to France in November, 1791, and associated with the Girondists. As the years passed Wordsworth contrived to believe that in his youth he had seriously considered throwing in his lot with the revolutionaries. Nothing, in fact, can have been further from his thought. He was not a coward, but, like many a man with far less claim to genius, he regarded himself as the trustee for something supremely important to humanity, his unwritten masterpieces. Many years later he was returning with his wife and sister to England when the ship struck upon the sands. "My brother," writes Dorothy Wordsworth, "thinking it would be impossible to save his wife and me, had stripped off his coat to be ready to swim," an episode which aggravates our difficulty in taking Wordsworth very seriously when he writes :

"Yet would I at this time with willing heart
Have undertaken for a cause so great
Service however dangerous."

He deceived himself : he did not deceive his sister. Her feminine realism was uninfluenced by Wordsworth's heroics. "William is in France," she wrote ; "as we hear daily accounts of insurrections and broils, I cannot be too easy, though I think he is wise enough to get out of the way of danger." Wordsworth, on the other hand,

attributed his safety to Providence's concern for his unpublished work.

“ I thankfully acknowledge,
Forced by the gracious providence of Heaven,
To England I returned.”

But for this timely intervention

“ Doubtless, I should have then made common cause
With some who perished ; haply perished too,
A poor mistaken and bewildered offering,—
Should to the breast of Nature have gone back,
With all my resolutions, all my hopes,
A Poet only to myself, to men
Useless . . . ”

Wordsworth returned to England in December, 1792, leaving behind him in France a small daughter, the by-product of that “ real benevolence ” which Wordsworth notes as one of the more agreeable characteristics of the French. Wordsworth reached the security of England a few days after the French contagion had provoked in Geneva a revolution which seriously alarmed an Englishman living in Lausanne. In the matter of revolutions Gibbon's sympathies would have been, not with Wordsworth, but with Chateaubriand in France and with Burke in England. “ Burke's book,” he writes to Lord Sheffield, “ is a most admirable medicine against the French disease, which has made too much progress even in this happy country. I admire his eloquence, I approve his politics, I adore his chivalry, and I can even forgive his superstition.” Gibbon's estimate of the French Revolutionary armies was as mistaken as Hitler's of the Russians. On April 4th, 1792, he assures Lord Sheffield that “ the people have lost all sense of patriotism, and that on the first discharge of an Austrian cannon, the game is up.” He was equally convinced on September 12th, 1792, just before Valmy, that the Duke of Brunswick would soon be master of Paris. “ On every rational principle of calculation he must succeed.” On October 5th he records the French invasion of Savoy and reassures his friend that he has not been “ killed and eaten by those cannibals,” and on January 1st he describes the Revolution in Geneva and adds, “ You must have observed that Savoy is now become *le département de Mont Blanc* . . . my noble scenery is clouded by the democratical aspect of twelve leagues of

the opposite coast, which every morning obtrude themselves on my view." Meanwhile he was making preparations to return to England for a visit to his friend. "I have made up my mind to pass through the territories of the French republic. . . . I must arm myself with patience to support the vexatious insolence of democratical tyranny. I have even a sort of curiosity to spend some few days at Paris, to assist at the debates of the Pandæmonium, to seek an introduction to the principal devils, and to contemplate a new form of public and private life, which never existed before and which I devoutly hope will not long continue to exist."

Wordsworth might exclaim :

"Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive,"

but the blood-red dawn of Revolutionary Justice was not quite so attractive when viewed from Lausanne. Refugees from France were appearing in ever increasing numbers, refugees who might have emended Wordsworth's line to read :

"Hard was it in that dawn to keep alive."

Poor Gibbon, as he listened to their distressing tales, became increasingly apprehensive. "I turn aside from the horrid and not improbable (yet not impossible) supposition, that, in three or four years' time, myself and my best friends may be reduced to the deplorable condition of the French emigrants : they thought it impossible three or four years ago."

Gibbon's perplexities were aggravated by the execution of the King. Geneva was in the power of the Revolutionaries : at any moment the French might decide to "liberate" Lausanne. His instinct was to go into mourning for Louis, but was it prudent to advertise one's reactionary sympathies ?

"To the general supineness of the inhabitants of Lausanne," he writes on February 9th, 1793, "I must ascribe, that the death of Louis the Sixteenth has been received with less horror and indignation than I could have wished. I was much tempted to go into mourning, and probably should, had the duchess been still here, but, as the only Englishman of any mark, I was afraid of being singular ; more especially as our French emigrants, either from prudence or poverty, do not wear black."

In May, 1793, Gibbon left Lausanne, intending to return in due

course. He travelled back to England *via* Germany and never saw Switzerland again, for he died in London on January 16th, 1794, towards the end of his fifty-sixth year. I have always regretted that Clio the Muse was unsuccessful in her intercession on behalf of the historian, for Gibbon's account of the "liberation" of Lausanne by the Jacobins would have been a delight to read.

Wordsworth, meanwhile, was passing through a mental crisis. He was losing his Faith—in the Revolution. He had welcomed the Revolution with generous enthusiasm because he believed that the evils of the old régime would be eradicated, and never suspected that greater evils would take their place. An amiable and well-intentioned King was ready to accept a peaceful transition from a feudal to a liberal monarchy, and the only result of the Terror was to deliver France to the military dictatorship of Napoleon.

He had welcomed the Revolution with the generous enthusiasm of youth. He believed it to be a drastic but necessary purge for great evils, and he cannot be blamed for failing to foresee that the Revolution would end in a despotism far more ruthless than the rule of the well-intentioned Louis XVI. From the first he hated Robespierre and was dismayed by the Terror. In the summer of 1794 he writes to a friend, "I am a determined enemy of every species of violence . . . I deplore the miserable situation of the French," and with every aggravation of the Terror his doubts increased. His diagnosis of his own mental processes during this period is as interesting as it is honest. He confesses that he shrank from :

". . . taking to the shame
Of a false prophet,"

and he concedes that the vanity which dare not confess to error was a potent factor in maintaining his loyalty to his Revolutionary Faith,

". . . While resentment rose
Striving to hide, what nought could heal, the wounds
Of mortified presumption, I adhered
More firmly to old tenets, and to prove
Their temper, strained them more."

His faith which even Robespierre could not destroy, and which had revived after Robespierre's fall, was finally extinguished by the invasion of Switzerland.

On January 28th, 1798, the Revolutionary Armies of France crossed the frontier of Switzerland in order to "liberate" Vaud from the hated rule of Bern. On March 5th Bern fell and with Bern the old Confederation. The "Liberator," like the labourer, is worthy of his hire. Vaud was presented with a bill for £28,000 for her "liberation." "France is not wealthy enough," the Swiss were told, "to liberate Europe gratuitously. She is therefore entitled to indemnify herself from the liberated nations by seizing the goods of the State, the Church and the aristocracy." On entering Bern the victorious general sent twenty-four million francs in species and securities to France, and retained a further two million for himself and his entourage. The museum and Art galleries were plundered. Even the bears from the bear pit were sent to Paris. The French then proceeded to impose upon Switzerland the "Helvetic Constitution," an attempt to replace the ancient Federation of quasi-autonomous Cantons by a centralised bureaucratic unitary state controlled by a "Directory" of five on the French model. The oldest democracies in Europe, the Catholic Cantons round the shores of Lake Lucerne, were not prepared to surrender their ancient liberties to those who in the name of "Liberty, Equality and Fraternity" were preparing to impose upon Switzerland a despotism far more irksome than that of the Habsburgs against which the Forest Cantons had revolted. The "Liberty" of the Revolution was, Burckhardt remarked, the liberty "of a forest fire," free to devour all that lay in the path of its flames.

Lucerne was occupied without difficulty, but under the command of Alois Reding, the hero of one of Wordsworth's poems, Schwyz offered a desperate resistance. Women dug trenches, dragged the cannon up the mountain sides and even took part in the actual fighting, but the heroic Schwyzers were forced, after some initial successes, to surrender on May 4th. In September, 1798, a revolt in Nidwalden ended on September 9th, with the historic massacre at Stans, in which 102 women and 25 children were killed and 712 buildings destroyed. In justice to the French it must be admitted that the women fought side by side with their menfolk in a heroic but hopeless struggle. From 1798 until the fall of Napoleon Switzerland was, in effect, a protectorate of France.

The subjugation of Switzerland profoundly shocked many who, until then, had supported the French Revolution. Switzerland was the symbol of freedom, the country in which a primitive democracy had obtained its first victories against reactionary feudalism. The attack upon Switzerland by a Power claiming to be in the vanguard of progress produced much the same effect as the attack on democratic Finland by Soviet Russia in 1939. Wordsworth wrote the famous sonnet (*Thoughts of a Briton on the subjugation of Switzerland*) which begins :

“ Two Voices are there ; one is of the sea,
One of the mountains ; each a mighty voice :
In both from age to age thou didst rejoice,
They were thy chosen music, Liberty ! ”

Coleridge's repudiation was even more decisive :

“ Forgive me, Freedom ! O forgive those dreams,
I hear thy voice, I hear thy loud lament,
From bleak Helvetia's icy caverns sent—
I hear thy groans upon her blood-stained streams.
Heroes, that for your peaceful country perished,
And ye that, fleeing, spot your mountain snows
With bleeding wounds, forgive me, that I cherished
One thought that ever blessed your cruel foes !
To scatter rage and traitorous guilt
Where Peace her jealous home had built ;
A patriot race to disinherit
Of all that made their stormy wilds so dear ;
And with inexpiable spirit
To taint the bloodless freedom of the mountaineer.
O France, that mockest Heaven, adulterous blind,
And patriot only in pernicious toils !
Are these thy boasts, Champion of human kind ?
To mix with Kings in the low lust of sway,
Yell in the hunt, and share the murderous prey,
To insult the shrine of Liberty with spoils
From freemen torn, to tempt and to betray ? ”

History seldom repeats herself exactly. France, our enemy when she invaded Switzerland, did not subsequently become our ally, and consequently those who were shocked by the invasion of

Switzerland never felt under any obligation to prove that the Revolutionary Armies had only invaded Switzerland to anticipate an Austrian invasion of France.

Wordsworth's spiritual crisis had ended. He had lost his faith in the Revolution, and like many of those who turned to the mountains in search of a substitute for vanished religious beliefs, Wordsworth sought for and found consolation in the Lakeland hills. "If in this time," he writes in 1800 :

" Of dereliction and dismay, I yet
Despair not of our nature,
 . . . the gift is yours
Ye winds and sounding cataracts ! 'tis yours
Ye mountains ! "

II

Switzerland regained her independence after the defeat of Napoleon in 1812 and in the summer of 1814 Lord Castlereagh sent the most brilliant of the younger British diplomatists, Stratford Canning, to Zürich, which was then the Federal capital. Canning, who was only 28 years of age, had an immense influence in mitigating the evil effects of the bitter enmity of the different Cantons, and it was partly due to his efforts that the reorganisation of Switzerland was completed on September 12th, 1814, by the admission to the Confederation of the former "Allied States" of Geneva, Neuchâtel and the Valais. In 1816 Canning drew up a Memorial in which he advocated the creation of a Federal military school and a standing military authority. "These reforms," writes the distinguished Swiss historian, the late Professor Wilhelm Oeschli of the University of Zürich, "were not new, but only such as the superior officers of Switzerland had long demanded as indispensable. But the Memorial of the esteemed representative of Great Britain has this advantage that it stiffened the back of the supporters of military reform. So far Stratford Canning is not wrong when he claims for England the honour of having given the impulse to the Federal army reform of 1817, to which our military organisation in the nineteenth century goes back."

In the Swiss Civil War of 1847 between the Federal Government and the "Sonderbund," a league of Catholic Cantons, the Continental





powers supported the Sonderbund as the embodiment of conservative principles. Metternich was anxious to intervene. "The British Cabinet," writes Oeschli, "was the only one which exhibited a sympathetic understanding of the aims of Liberal Switzerland. . . . On principle he (Lord Palmerston) was opposed to any intervention in Switzerland. By apparently acceding to the desires of the other cabinets he most adroitly secured for himself the leadership of the anti-Swiss movement, being thus enabled to blunt its point and to delay it until it was too late. . . . Switzerland by her steadfast resistance to the Sonderbund won definite freedom from the yoke of the foreigner. The service which in this matter free England had rendered her cannot and never will be forgotten."

The last attempt of a European Power to intervene in Swiss affairs arose out of the Neuchâtel question in 1857. In 1694 the male line of the Longuevilles, the ruling family of Neuchâtel, died out, and when, on June 16th, 1707, the Duchess of Nemours died, the house of Longueville became extinct, and no less than thirteen pretenders claimed the inheritance. Eventually Frederick I of Prussia became lord of Neuchâtel, mainly because Bern was unwilling to allow the gate of Jura to fall into French hands. In 1814 Neuchâtel was admitted into the Swiss Confederation, but the King of Prussia did not renounce his rights and Neuchâtel became an instrument of the Berlin court which continued from time to time to intervene in Swiss affairs. In 1851 Palmerston resisted a proposal to erect Neuchâtel into a State separated from Switzerland but allied to her. A revolt of the royalists in Neuchâtel, to which the King of Prussia had been privy, and the determination of Bern to bring the royalists to trial forced the issue.

Britain alone opposed the demands of the Prussians, Austrians, Russians and French that Switzerland should unconditionally surrender her captives. On December 18th, 1856, Prussia broke off diplomatic relations with Switzerland. It was generally believed that she intended to mobilise on January 2nd. Switzerland refused to be cowed by threats, mobilised her army and prepared for war. Her firmness was appreciated by the British Government and our Envoy was instructed by Lord Clarendon to inform the President "that the interests and honour of Switzerland are close to our heart, and that we will consent to nothing which cannot be well accepted by the Federal government. The behaviour of Switzerland and, I venture to say, of the Federal Executive is admirable ; and, happen

what may, it will enormously increase the respect which all those feel for the Confederation whose views are not inspired by hatred of Liberal institutions."

In the Conference convened to settle the Neuchâtel question, a conference which ended in a victory for the Swiss, Great Britain supported all the Swiss requests. "So England," writes Oeschli, "during the Neuchâtel affair, from beginning to end, proved herself the unswerving friend of Switzerland."

CHAPTER VI

SWITZERLAND AND THE ROMANTIC MOVEMENT

I

MOUNTAIN art which, as we have seen, declined with the Renaissance, began to recover during the transition from the Renaissance to the Romantic movement. It is only fair to warn the reader, by way of preface to what follows, that my own reactions to Alpine art are necessarily influenced, perhaps unduly influenced, by intimate knowledge of the Alpine range. A mountaineer for whom "features of the landscape" is something more than a metaphor, who loves the hills as a lover his mistress, inevitably tends to apply to mountains the standards of portraiture. He will demand from the mountain artist a portrait of his favourite peaks as faithful, not only to its form but to its spirit, as a Titian portrait, and yet, like the Titian portrait, something infinitely remote from the prosaic accuracy of a photograph. Mountain "portraits" are, of course, not the only mountain paintings which satisfy the exacting standards of a mountain connoisseur. Turner's *Pilatus from Küssnacht* is a glorious painting, and it is certainly not a portrait, for Turner's Pilatus bears as much resemblance to the Creator's Pilatus as Cory's Heraclitus to the Greek epigram of which it is nominally a translation. Turner's painting is not a portrait but a symphony, a colour symphony. "The arrangements of colours and lines," writes Ruskin, "is an art analogous to the composition of music, and entirely independent of the representation of facts. Good colouring does not necessarily convey the image of anything but itself. It consists in certain proportions and arrangements of light, but not in likenesses to anything." An exaggeration to which Ruskin obligingly provides the necessary corrective in the next paragraph. "Facts are often wanted without art as in a geological diagram; and art often without facts as in a Turkish carpet. And most men have been capable of giving either one or the other, but not both; only one or two, the very highest, can give both. Observe then. Men are universally divided, as respects their artistical qualifications, into three great classes; a right, a left and a centre. On the right are the men of facts, on the left the men of design, in the centre the men of both."

The "man of both" is faithful to the mountain facts and yet

gifted with the power to evoke not only the grand design of the peaks but also their majestic poetry.

II

In the second half of the eighteenth century English water-colourists made an important contribution to the interpretation of Alp scenery. William Pars travelled through Italy and Switzerland with Lord Palmerston and exhibited his Swiss drawings in London in 1771. "They were," writes Mr. Laurence Binyon in *English Water-Colours*, "perhaps the earliest revelation of the high Alps to the untravelled Englishman. . . . Revelation is, however, too emotional a word for these calm transcripts of mountain wilderness, of contorted masses and pinnacles of ice, which Pars delineates with the same undisturbed competence that he would have brought to the drawing of a country seat in the Home Counties of England."

But it is difficult to generalise about Pars. Ruskin reproduces "The Aiguille Dru" from an engraving of the Mer de Glace based on William Pars and concludes that this parody of the Dru proves "how totally inadequate the draughtsmen of the time were to perceive the character of the mountains," but Pars' *Mont Furka with the Rhone glacier* (1770), which is reproduced in colour in Smythe's *British Mountaineers*, combines poetic charm and fidelity to nature, and recalls the best work of the Swiss aquatintists.

Far more interesting than Pars is John Robert Cozens, one of the first to interpret the Romantic attitude to Italy and Switzerland. Much of his Swiss work is reproduced by the Walpole Society (vol. xxiii). "He stands beside Claude, and Corot," writes Mr. C. F. Bell in the introduction to this volume, "in his serene early sketches, amongst the painters whose works typify and embody the ideal Italy of the romantic era. . . . The Swiss period (August-September, 1776) was in some respects the most inspiring of all Cozens' life to the spiritual side of his art." It would, however, be most unfair to judge Cozens only by his Swiss drawings which are, as Mr. Bell remarks, "little more than monochromes and are extremely primitive in handling . . . technically quite rudimentary." By transforming the igneous rock of the Verte and Dru into sedimentary Cozens contrives (Plate I) to make the Dru and Verte look like the Great and the Little Zinne, and offers no "symphonic" compensation for this travesty of a mountain

portrait. Of the two versions of the Wetterhorn from Zweilüt-schinen on Plate III I prefer the lower, in which the Wetterhorn vanishes in a background of haze, to the upper version, a blurred and muzzy caricature, neither portrait nor symphony. And yet in spite of patent defects this series was one of the first to convey the lyrical note in the Romantic attitude to mountains. The view of the Meiringen Valley, for instance (Plate V), which faces page 86, helps us to understand Constable's remark, "Cozens is all poetry." "There is no effort," as Mr. Binyon remarks, "to seize and set down the structure of the rocks and mountains. What is communicated is feeling, but feeling of a rare kind. . . . It is an exquisite sense for the marvellous mountain-stillness. The world is removed ; the terror and glory of Alp and glacier veil themselves ; the infinitely remote, the impalpable mingling of cloud and snow, a suspension of motion, attract the surrendered spirit. Nothing of the picturesque, nothing of romantic 'Horreur' appears."

Romantic "Horreur" reappears in the water-colours of Francis Towne, who visited the Alps in 1781, five years after Cozens' Swiss tour. In their treatment of mountains Cozens and Towne are precursors of two contrasted aspects of the Romantic Movement, the spell of romantic beauty and the fascination of romantic terror. Towne stands midway between the artists who were utterly uninterested in the mountains which they regarded as repulsive, and the artists who are fascinated by their beauty. Towne was fascinated—but not by their beauty. There is no evidence in his work of the romantic enjoyment of mountain scenery. He is only conscious of their austere and awful sublimity. "Contrary to all the accepted canons of the eighteenth century," writes Mr. A. P. Oppé, "Towne did nothing to soften, but everything to accentuate, the crushing grandeur of the mountains. He does not dwell, like Pars or the Swiss draughtsman, on the pleasing details of valley life which throw back the mountains into a distance where they are picturesque and tolerable ; nor, like John Cozens, does he diversify and etherealise the mountains themselves until they disappear into cloud from which they are at times indistinguishable. . . . He is totally devoid of sentimental enjoyment in Swiss scenes ; the mountains, in so far as they are anything more than material for coloured patterns, are something hard and cruel and too imminent and hostile to permit any thought of rustic bliss or primitive innocence in the valleys at their base."

Towne's greatest mountain painting "The Source of the Arveiron," facing page 71 of this book, is reproduced as a coloured frontispiece to Mr. Binyon's *English Water-Colours*. Nothing could be less like a mountain portrait than this colour symphony. Only an elusive hint of the Chamonix peaks and glaciers links Towne's painting with its nominal theme. "The stark simplicity of the design," writes Mr. Binyon, "with its cold blue and gleaming white, is singular in the art of the period." The skyline descends from a broken range of dark rocks, fluted with faintly pencilled snow gullies to a radiant dome of snow. From the base of the rocks two bare precipitous slopes plunge down into the mystery of an unseen valley. No human figures in the foreground, no sign of friendly chalet or human habitation relieves the stark and sombre austerity of this mountainscape. The gleaming coils of the glacier are curiously sinister with a suggestion of latent menace. Towne has translated into paint the feelings which Shelley expressed in his poem, *Mont Blanc*,

"The glaciers creep

Like snakes that watch their prey, from their far fountains
Slow rolling on."

When we turn from Towne to the contemporary artists of the Swiss school, such as Grimm and Linck, we enter a completely different world. The Genevese Linck began to exhibit his mountain scenes in 1789. Dr. Engel reproduces in *La Littérature Alpine* three of his coloured aquarells, of which the most effective is a view of the Eiger, Mönch and Jungfrau from the Bussalp, below the Faulhorn, not from the Scheidegg as stated by Dr. Engel on p. 138. This aquarelle combines mountain portraiture with mountain poetry, for though it is so accurate that one can pick out details, as, for instance, "Mac's Leap," in the Tschuggen ski run, yet it bears the same relationship to a photograph that poetry does to prose.

Linck was one of the precursors of a native school of Swiss artists, whose coloured prints are much sought after by modern collectors. A coloured aquatint of the Wetterhorn from Rosenlaui, by Gabriel Lory *filis*, faces me as I write. This lyrical interpretation of one of the loveliest of Alpine views, is at once supremely poetic and yet loyal to objective fact.

Many artists, less famous than Linck and the Lorys, were pro-

ducing excellent mountain work in the last decades of the eighteenth and in the early decades of the nineteenth century. Their craftsmanship is as unpretentious as the Swiss character, but within their self-imposed limitations they were quietly successful. They made little attempt to convey the might, majesty, power and dominion of the great mountains, but they were eminently successful in suggesting their charm. The relationship of their work to the greater masterpieces of mountain art is, as de Beer remarked to me, analogous to that of a minuet to a symphony.

Certainly these coloured prints have all the exquisite charm of a dainty period piece, that enchanting period just before the smoke-grimed dawn of the Industrial Revolution. The Switzerland of Linck and the Lorys was the Switzerland of the Romantic Movement, a Switzerland of unclimbed peaks and uncharted glaciers, the Switzerland of Wordsworth and Shelley and Byron, the Switzerland which Ruskin saw as a child, and mourned in prose whose beauty is, at least, a partial compensation for vanished loveliness.

III

Among the poets of the Romantic Movement who turned the attention of mankind to the beauty of the mountains none ranks higher than Wordsworth, but it was the Lakeland mountains and not the Alps which inspired his noblest poetry. His two prolonged visits to the Alps, the first in 1790 and the second in 1820, were productive of a great deal of commonplace and uninteresting verse. His mountain epithets are either commonplace, as for instance,

“ From dew-sprinkled grass to heights guarded with snow,”

or plain silly, as in the fatuous apostrophe to the Staubbach,

“ This bold, this bright, this sky-born WATERFALL ! ”

Wordsworth, however, wrote one, if only one, magnificent Alpine poem, his description of the Simplon Pass.

“ The immeasurable height
Of woods decaying, never to be decayed,
The stationary blasts of waterfalls,
And in the narrow rent at every turn
Winds thwarting winds, bewildered and forlorn,
The torrents shooting from the clear blue sky,

The rocks that muttered close upon our ears
 Black drizzling crags that spake by the wayside
 As if a voice were in them, the thick sight
 And giddy prospect of the raving stream,
 The unfettered clouds and region of the Heavens
 Tumult and peace, the darkness and the light. . . ."

Tennyson, according to Dr. Engel, told D. W. Freshfield that in his view Wordsworth had never written anything finer than these lines. If we knew nothing of Wordsworth our appreciation of this poem would be unaffected, but Shelley's mountain poetry is so much the reflection of his philosophy that it is difficult to criticise it excepting within the framework of his life and thought.

"Lovely Lucerne" which the modern poet despises, and through which he hastens, in the St. Gotthard Express, on his way to Italy, was selected by Shelley as the venue for a romantic and irregular honeymoon. On July 28th, 1814, Shelley left England with Mary Godwin and Mary's step-sister, Jane Clairemont, usually known as Claire, a name which she adopted and imposed on her family and her friends. They drove to Paris and decided to walk from Paris to Switzerland through a country with which Britain had been at war for twenty years, and which was then overrun with a recently demobilised army after a demoralising defeat. Shelley bought an ass to carry the luggage, but the ass revolted and was disposed of at Charenton where they bought a mule for ten Napoleons. "About nine o'clock," writes Mary, "we departed. We were clad in black silk. I rode on the mule, which carried also our portmanteau, Shelley and Claire followed."

From Troyes Shelley wrote a letter to the wife he had left in England. Fearing lest she might misinterpret his elopement as indicating some light diminution in his loyalty and in his affection, he hastened to assure her of the constancy of his devotion. "I write to show you that I do not forget you ; I write to urge you to come to Switzerland, where you will at least find one firm and constant friend, to whom your interests will always be dear—by whom your feelings will never be wilfully injured. From none can you expect this but me—all others are either unfeeling or selfish, or have beloved friends of their own." The fascinating thing about this letter is its shattering sincerity. Shelley was as incapable of doing anything which he believed to be wrong as of making the least attempt to conform to what the world believed right. There

is something inhuman about Shelley, a suggestion of an Elemental incarnate in human form, a refugee from a realm in which the Ten Commandments are not valid. "Shelley," writes Ethel Colburn Mayne, "is pinnaled almost alone in his seraphic gravity. Byron, on the contrary, touched humanity at every point." "Shelley," wrote Byron to Murray on August 3rd, 1822, "was without exception the *best* and least selfish man I ever knew." And to Lady Blessington he described him as "full of delicacy, disinterested beyond all other men. . . . He had formed to himself a *beau idéal* of all that is fine, high-minded, and noble, and he acted up to this ideal even to the very letter." He did indeed even when he was running away from his wife.

The mule that had been bought in exchange for the ass was sold at Troyes and replaced by an open voiture, and three weeks after landing at Calais, Shelley, Mary and Claire crossed the Swiss frontier near Pontarlier. Shelley had just turned twenty-two and Mary was within a few weeks of her seventeenth birthday. They travelled *via* St. Sulpice and Neuchâtel, near which they had their first view of the High Alps, to Lucerne, whence they went by boat to Brunnen.

Their first day at Brunnen was stormy, but it cleared in the evening. "Shelley and I walked on the banks," writes Mary, "and sitting on a rude pier, Shelley read aloud the account of the Siege of Jerusalem from Tacitus." Meanwhile there was the problem of ways and means. It had cost them £60 to cross France. They had £28 left and no hope of any more, and it was therefore imperative to return as quickly as possible and by the cheapest possible route. Accordingly, on August 27th, four days after arriving in Brunnen, they left for England, and consoled themselves with the thought that they could take advantage of the rivers Reuss and Rhine, and reach England without travelling a league on land. Water travel is cheaper than land travel, but even so Shelley had not enough money to pay the cab when he returned home. Fortunately his wife, Harriet, was able to help him out.

Early in May, 1816, Shelley and Mary, whom he was to marry, after the suicide of Harriet, on December 30th, 1816, returned to Switzerland. They were accompanied once again by the indefatigable Claire, who was anxious to renew her acquaintance with the Alps but also her liaison with Lord Byron, a liaison which she had forced on him in London. She had written him a letter,

signed "E. Trefusis," in which she invited him to state what would be his reactions if a "woman whose reputation remained unstained . . . should throw herself on your mercy."

Byron left her letter unanswered and her problem unsolved but a lady, tired of an "unstained reputation" is not easily baulked, and the reluctant stainer finally succumbed to her siege. "I was not in love," wrote Byron to his half-sister Augusta Leigh, "nor have any love left for any, but I could not exactly play the Stoic with a woman who had scrambled eight hundred miles to unphilosophise me."

The British colony at Geneva were agreeably scandalised by the relations between Shelley and Mary, Byron and Claire and by the backwash of rumours which had followed Byron from England, rumours of which his relations to his half-sister were the theme. An English novelist, Mrs. Hervey, of sixty-five virtuous summers, fainted when confronted by the notorious reprobate.

Byron and the Shelleys soon tired of the curiosity of their fellow-guests and left the hotel only to discover that the villa which they had leased, was overlooked by the hotel, the obliging landlord of which provided his guests with a telescope in order that they might continue their researches into the habits of the Byron-Shelley ménage. Byron and Shelley escaped their attentions by transferring themselves to Cologny on the opposite side of the lake.

On June 22nd Byron and Shelley left for a tour of Lake Léman in the course of which they were nearly wrecked between Meillerie and St. Gingolph. Byron told Shelley, who could not swim, that he thought he could save him, but "Shelley answered me with the greatest coolness that 'he had no notion of being saved, and that I would have enough to do to save myself, and begged 'not to trouble me.'" Wordsworth's reactions to the danger of shipwreck have already been noted.

Meillerie and Clarens were associated with St. Preux and Julie, hero and heroine of Rousseau's *Nouvelle Héloïse*. At Lausanne Byron gathered some acacia leaves from the decayed summer house where Gibbon completed his History. "I refrained from doing so," writes Shelley, "fearing to outrage the greater and more sacred name of Rousseau; the contemplation of whose imperishable creations had left no vacancy in my heart for mortal things." At Clarens they gathered roses "feeling that they might be the posterity of some planted by Julie's hand."

Of all those who were making the fashionable and sentimental pilgrimage to the scenes of Rousseau's romance, none were more fervent than Shelley. He not only accepted with uncritical enthusiasm Rousseau's social philosophy, but he was tempted to look at mountains through Rousseau's spectacles. A pity, for Rousseau's long distance enthusiasm for mountains was, as I have already shown, purely ideological. Rousseau found "sermons in stones" but never looked for beauty in rocks, and there was nothing in his writings to stimulate in Shelley a genuine interest in mountains as mountains rather than in mountains as text-books for a philosophy of revolt.

It may well be that in any case the stable and immutable hills would have had little appeal to the poet who had a natural affinity with

"the wind enchanted shapes of wandering mist."

No poet has ever described with greater felicity the ever-changing countries of the sky. The unstable imagery of heaven and the power and dominion of the restless sea ; these things he understood, but his mountains are dream hills with no roots in this earth. In the most glorious passage in *Prometheus Unbound* the "purple mountains" and "darker lake" only serve as a foil to the cloud imagery.

"The point of one white star is quivering still
Deep in the orange light of widening morn
Beyond the purple mountains : through a chasm
Of wind-divided mist the darker lake
Reflects it : now it wanes : it gleams again
As the waves fade, and as the burning threads
Of woven cloud unravel in pale air."

Even the peaks resolve themselves into clouds.

" 'Tis lost ! and through yon peaks of cloud-like snow
The roseate sunlight quivers : hear I not
The Aeolian music of her sea-green plumes
Winnowing the crimson dawn. . . .
And multitudes of dense white fleecy clouds
Were wandering in thick flocks along the mountains
Shepherded by the slow, unwilling wind."

In July Shelley, Mary and Claire spent four days at Chamonix. In the hotel registers in which other travellers had recorded their

impressions of the scenery Shelley described himself as an atheist, democrat and philanthropist, but the first glorious impact of Mont Blanc provoked a reaction which dispelled, if only for the moment, the fumes of Rousseauesque philosophy. "I never knew," he wrote to Peacock, "I never imagined what mountains were before. The immensity of these aerial summits excited, when they suddenly burst upon the sight, a sentiment of ecstatic wonder, not unallied to madness. . . . There is more in all these scenes than mere magnitude of proportion : there is a majesty of outline ; there is an awful grace in the very colours which invest these wonderful shapes—a charm which is peculiar to them, quite distinct even from the reality of their unutterable greatness," but few and far between are the evocative phrases which suggest a picture, phrases such as his reference to the glacier pinnacles "covered with a network of frosted silver." The "snowy pinnacles which shot into the bright blue sky" stimulated him like a powerful drug. The poet who remained to the last a stranger on this earth had a natural affinity with peaks which "pierce the clouds like things not belonging to this earth."

It would be difficult to prove from internal evidence alone that Shelley was more familiar with the scenery of Chamonix than Coleridge who, like Shelley, wrote a poem about Mont Blanc, but who, unlike Shelley, had never seen Mont Blanc. Coleridge, in point of fact, was never nearer the Alps than Leghorn. Of Shelley's poem *Mont Blanc*, Dr. Engel writes, "On parvient à retrouver tel ou tel trait du paysage, mais, en cherchant une identification trop précise, on a l'impression de commettre un sacrilège." A devout worshipper at Shelley's shrine might well feel that it would be sacrilegious to identify the scenery of the earthly Mont Blanc with the imagery of Shelley's poem of which the Platonic beauty of a timeless Mont Blanc is the implicit theme.

". . . The secret Strength of things
Which governs thought, and to the indefinite dome
Of Heaven is as a law, inhabits thee !"

But, of course, Rousseau keeps on breaking through.

"Thou hast a voice, great Mountain, to repeal
Large codes of fraud and woe."

Whereas Shelley's Mont Blanc agrees with Shelley in disliking

kings, priests and nobles, Coleridge's *Mont Blanc* is a sermon on the text *O ye Ice and Snow, Bless ye the Lord*,

"And they too have a voice, yon piles of snow
And in their perilous fall shall thunder God . . .
Thou kingly Spirit throned among the hills
Thou dread ambassador from Earth to Heaven,
Great Hierarch ! tell thou the silent sky,
And tell the stars, and tell yon rising sun
Earth, with her thousand voices, praises God."

IV

In Byron's case, as in Shelley's, it is impossible to divorce his mountain poetry from the circumstances in which that poetry was written. It was, as he said, "the Staubbach, the Jungfrau and *something else*" which inspired the Manfred drama. What was this "something else" ?

The Byronic legend, which Byron imposed with such success on his contemporaries, was a synthesis of two themes, the predestined and inextinguishable crime, and the fatal lover who destroys what he loves.

The Doge in *Marino Faliero* strikes the Byronic note when he says

" . . . There was that in my spirit ever,
Which shaped out for itself some great reverse."

and Manfred in his dying agony turns to the Evil Spirit and exclaims

"I have not been thy dupe, nor am thy prey—
But was my own destroyer, and will be
My own hereafter."

And earlier in the play Manfred appears in the role of the fatal lover,

"My injuries came down on those who loved me—
On those whom I best have loved : I never quell'd
An enemy, save in my just defence—
But my embrace was fatal."

Byron was as avid of remorse as Don Juan of seduction. "All through his work," writes Ethel Mayne, "from the earliest days, this (as it were) longing for remorse declares itself. He was like

a boy in that, as he was in so much else; he wanted to terrify mankind, and make them see, as in *Manfred*—

‘ . . . A dusk and awful figure rise
Like an infernal god from out the earth.’

It is worth observing that not until remorse *had* entered his soul did he ever think of keeping a Journal.”

Byron began his journal on November 14th, 1813. Five months later on April 15th, 1814, Byron's half-sister Augusta Leigh gave birth to a daughter, Elizabeth Medora, of whom Byron was the father. On this point, as Ethel Mayne remarks, “conjecture is at an end—if we hear not Lord Lovelace” (Byron's grandson) “and *Astarte*” (which Lord Lovelace wrote) “neither will we be persuaded though one rose from the dead; but what Lord Lovelace proves in *Astarte* is precisely what rumour was murmuring in the town alive with rumour and with rancour, all through the spring and summer of 1816.”

Byron and his half-sister had been separated in childhood, and first met as comparative strangers when Byron was 25 and Augusta 29. “Forbidden relationships,” writes Ethel Mayne, “were in the air of the French Revolution—that upheaval of all accepted ideas. In 1789, Lord Bolingbroke had eloped with his half-sister; of Napoleon, such rumours had long been prevalent; to make a closer juxtaposition, Caroline Lamb's mother, Lady Bessborough, had been the victim of similar whisperings.”

Augusta had very few qualifications for the role of first lady in a Byronic drama of inexpiable guilt. Lord Stanhope described her as “extremely unprepossessing . . . (she) can never have had the least pretension to beauty.” Lady Shelley asserted that she was “not at all attractive” and wrote of her as a “Dowdy-Goody,” and though there were others who judged her attractive, and asserted that she had charm, nobody claimed that she was a great beauty. Her mind was as undistinguished as her appearance. Byron who declared that he hated “an esprit in petticoats” called her “d—d crinkum-crankum” and a “Goose.” The “moral idiocy” with which she was taxed by Lady Byron was blended with sentimental religiosity. She was a great giver of bibles and prayer-books, and disapproved strongly of immoral literature. She refused to

continue reading *Don Juan*, thereby provoking a bitter sneer. Byron replied that he was delighted to see *her* grown "so moral."

Had Augusta not been Byron's half-sister there would have been no liaison, for many women far lovelier and far more brilliant than Augusta would have found it difficult to resist Byron at the height of his fame, but as Augusta was the only candidate for the role of partner in an inexpiable sin, Byron had to make the best of her commonplace charms, and endure the sin for the sake of the scandal. Desire for remorse rather than remorse for desire was the key to the Augusta liaison.

But scandal there must be, and Byron left nothing to chance. In the fateful year 1813 he wrote *The Bride of Abydos*, the hero and heroine of which believe themselves to be brother and sister. The publication of this play crystallised rumours which were already taking shape. Augusta Leigh's nephew at Eton was kept fully posted by his young friends as to deductions which were being drawn from *The Bride of Abydos*. Byron is said to have confided his secret to more than one of his woman friends, and when Augusta's daughter was born he wrote to Lady Melbourne that the child was "not an 'Ape,'" an unmistakable allusion to the mediæval superstition that incestuous unions produced monsters, and he added, "But positively she and I will grow good and all that, and so we are *now* and shall be these three weeks and more too." "Indiscreet to a degree that is surprising" was Lady Blessington's verdict, but the indiscretions were calculated. Well might Byron exclaim,

"I have been cunning in my overthrow
The careful pilot of my proper woe."

On April 18th, 1816, Lady Jersey, one of Byron's most loyal supporters, gave a party at Almack's to which both Byron and Augusta were invited. Mrs. George Lamb ostentatiously cut Augusta, and Byron's entry occasioned a general exodus of ladies of fashion. The "careful pilot" had achieved the social shipwreck which he had planned.

Byron was not only cunning in his overthrow, but exceedingly thorough. On April 25th Byron left England for ever, and in *Manfred*, of which the scene was laid in the Oberland, he crossed the "t's" and dotted the "i's" of *The Bride of Abydos*.

The theme of *Manfred* is Manfred's guilty love for Astarte, and

London Society had no difficulty in interpreting Manfred's confession

“—my blood ! the pure warm stream
 Which ran in the veins of my fathers, and in ours
 When we were in our youth, and had one heart,
 And loved each other as we should not love . . .
 . . . we were not made
 To torture each other, though it were
 The deadliest sin to love as we have loved.”

"No avowal," wrote Mrs. Villiers, "can be more complete. It is too barefaced for her (Augusta's) friends to deny the allusion." Augusta was shattered by this blatant advertisement of a liaison which she was as anxious to conceal as Byron to proclaim. Byron wrote and asked her if *Manfred* had not caused "a pucker," a heartless remark which wounded her, as Ethel Mayne says, "precisely as all women who had to do with Byron were wounded sooner or later."

The setting of *Manfred* was based on Byron's memories of a mountain tour which began when Byron and Hobhouse left Clarens on September 19th, 1816. From Clarens they crossed the Col de Jaman, and reached Lake Thun via the Simmental. They visited Lauterbrunnen, crossed the Little Scheidegg to Grindelwald and the Great Scheidegg to Meiringen and returned to Geneva *via* Interlaken, Berne and Morat. Throughout this journey Byron kept a letter-journal which he sent to Augusta, and which concludes with the words :—"To you dearest Augusta I send, and for you I have kept this record of what I have seen and felt. Love me as you are beloved by me."

Byron complained to his sister that the mountain scenes through which he had passed had not "enabled me to lose my own wretched identity in the majesty and the power and the glory around, above and beneath me." This rings true, which is more than can be said for Byron's *alter ego*, Childe Harold's confession,

**"I live not in myself, but I become
Portion of that around me."**

No man lived more completely in himself than did Byron.

Byron's unedited reactions must be sought for in his letters. His descriptions of mountain scenery are far more effective in his





letters and more evocative when fresh from the mint than in the polished form in which they reappear in *Manfred*. "The torrent is in shape curving over the rock, like the *tail* of a white horse streaming in the wind, such as it might be conceived would be that of the 'pale horse' on which Death is mounted in the Apocalypse. It is neither mist nor water, but a something between both; its immense height (nine hundred feet) gives it a wave or curve, a spreading here or condensation there, wonderful and indescribable." Such is his prose description of the Staubbach.

And here is the *Manfred* version :

"It is not noon; the sunbow's rays still arch
The torrent with the many hues of heaven
And roll the sheeted silver's waving column
Over the crag's headlong perpendicular,
And fling its lines of foaming light along,
And to and fro, like the pale courser's tail
The Giant steed, to be bestrode by Death
As told in the Apocalypse."

Byron visited the Upper Glacier at Grindelwald and described it as a "frozen hurricane." Only two words and yet more evocative and more effective than the thirty words which he employs to elaborate the same metaphor in *Manfred*.

"O'er the savage sea,
The glassy ocean of the mountain ice,
We skim its rugged breakers, which put on
The aspect of a tumbling tempest's foam
Frozen in a moment."

Wordsworth's reputation among modern critics would stand higher if he were not regarded as a man who in spite of a promising *début*—an ardent supporter of the French Jacobins and the father of an illegitimate child—ended miserably as a conservative and a Christian. Byron's poetry on the other hand has been overpraised because he ran true to bad form. Admittedly the moral vagaries of a poet must not be allowed to prejudice us against his poetry, but I am not wholly persuaded that distinction in sin imparts distinction to undistinguished verse. Ardent young moderns in violent reaction against what little remains of the Victorian code often write as if the road to Parnassus were paved with bad

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Opposite : *MER DE GLACE*. (Turner, see p. 73.)

intentions, but I refuse to be bullied into admiring bad verse merely because it was written by bad men.

Byron has written many delightful poems, and he is the author of some brilliant satire, but I still maintain that it is only as a letter-writer that he is quite first class. He never wrote anything as bad as Wordsworth at his worst or anything within measurable distance of Wordsworth at his best, but Wordsworth was untranslated and unknown in France until Emile Legouis introduced him to French readers, whereas Byron is, perhaps, even better known on the Continent than is Shakespeare. Byron and Oscar Wilde have been consistently overpraised on the Continent mainly because Byron's voluntary exile and Wilde's imprisonment form part of the indictment against British hypocrisy, an indictment which received powerful support from a famous passage in Macaulay's essay on Moore's biography of Byron.

"We know no spectacle so ridiculous as the British public in one of its periodical fits of morality. . . . Once in six or seven years our virtue becomes outrageous. We cannot suffer the laws of religion and decency to be violated. Accordingly some unfortunate man . . . is singled out as an expiatory sacrifice. . . . He is cut by the higher orders, and hissed by the lower. . . . At length our anger is satiated. Our victim is ruined and heart-broken. And our virtue goes quietly to sleep for seven years more." This passage, like so many of Macaulay's more popular passages, is slick, specious and superficial. It was Byron's insolence, not his morals, which angered people. The punishment of hubris is always popular, and it is only when hubris and the sins of the flesh are combined in the same person that the latter feature in the bill of indictment. The "howl of contumely" which followed Byron across the sea, and which pursued Wilde into prison was provoked, not by their morals but by their personalities. Men, as my brother Hugh once remarked to me, are disliked not for what they do, but for what they are. Shortly after Wilde had been sent to prison, a popular General shot himself to avoid court martial on a similar charge. A few days later *The Times* published a poem in which England was urged to remember that "whate'er he feared, he never feared a foe," and to "forget the rest."

In the criticism of art the use of the first person singular should be stressed, for "I do not consider Byron a first-class poet" is a more modest statement than "Byron is not a first-class poet"

and I wish it therefore to be understood that a modest ego is assumed to lurk in all sentences of this essay which imply an impersonal verdict. There are many of Byron's poems which I read with enjoyment, but *only* one which I can re-read with undiminished affection, *The Prisoner of Chillon*, which I far prefer to that third canto of Childe Harold, which might be described as a Poet's Guide to Lake Léman.

In my childhood I read *The Prisoner of Chillon* and Hans Andersen's *Ice Maiden*, and both the poem and the fairy tale will for ever be associated in my mind with a Switzerland of romantic imagination, the Switzerland in which chamois hunters awake the echoes of their jodellings in the rugged cliffs, in which gallant young herdsmen pluck the eaglets from eagles' nests, hidden away in all but inaccessible cliffs, to win the favour of lovely alp maidens ; in which the Ice Maiden lures the traveller to his glacier doom by siren whispers, in which again, to quote *The Prisoner of Chillon*,

" The fish swam by the castle wall
And they seemed joyous each and all ;
The eagle rode the rising blast
Methought he never flew so fast."

My room is hung with old prints of Switzerland which I prefer to photographs for the same reason that I prefer Homer's Iliad to Zola's description of Sedan. It is not the literal truth of a theme which is decisive for art, but the genuineness of the emotion which that theme inspires and the genius with which that emotion is translated into words, stone or paint as the case may be. The chamois hunter in Byron's *Manfred* does not convince us because he does not convince Byron.

" Even so
This way the chamois leapt : her nimble feet
Have baffled me ; my gains to-day will scarce
Repay my break-neck travail."

Byron was thinking of that " something else " when he wrote *Manfred*, but the Switzerland of romantic legend finds authentic expression in *The Prisoner of Chillon*, the hero of which bears much the same relation to Bonivard as Homer's Troy to Schlieman's. The most moving passage in the poem describes the prisoner's emotions when he is at last allowed the liberty of his cell. Liberated

from the chain which fetters him to the column, he climbs up to the little window of his cell and looks out on to the mountains, and discovers with surprise (as we too will discover with surprise when we return to the Alps after this long war exile) that the mountains have not changed.

“ But I was curious to ascend
To my barr'd windows and to bend
Once more, upon the mountains high
The quiet of a loving eye.

I saw them and they were the same
They were not changed like me in frame ;
I saw their thousand years of snow
On high—their wide long lake below,
And the blue Rhone in fullest flow ;
I heard the torrents leap and gush
O'er channell'd rock and broken bush ;
I saw the white-wall'd distant town,
And whiter sails go skimming down ;
And then there was a little isle,
Which in my very face did smile,
The only one in view ;
A small green isle, it seem'd no more,
Scarce broader than my dungeon floor,
But in it there were three tall trees,
And o'er it blew the mountain breeze,
And by it there were waters flowing,
And on it there were young flowers growing
Of gentle breath and hue.”

v

Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelley and Byron are represented in all Alpine anthologies, and rightly, but a far more gifted interpreter of mountain scenery than these, Dorothy Wordsworth, is all but unknown to mountain lovers. In the course of a lecture to a mountaineering club I asked if any of those present had read Dorothy Wordsworth's *Journal of a Tour on the Continent* (1820). None of those present even knew of the existence of this masterpiece of mountain literature. The late Professor E. de Selincourt's scholarly

edition (Macmillan) was not sent to the *Alpine Journal*, and the book is not, as yet, in the Alpine Club library. No extracts from this journal are quoted in my own Alpine anthology, or in R. L. G. Irving's or in Spender's, and the erudite Dr. Engel contents herself with two bleak and factual references to the journal in her detailed study of English and French Alpine literature.

Dorothy Wordsworth had a passionate love for mountains and she studied them with the intensity of a lover sensitive to the subtlest changes of mood and expression. Here is a passage from her description of the valley between Interlaken and Zweilütschinen.

"Many a streamlet crossed our way, after tumbling down the hills—sometimes clear as the springs of our Westmorland mountains; but the instant they touched the glacier river of the valley their pure spirit was lost, annihilated by its angry waters. I have seen a muddy and a transparent streamlet, at a few yards' distance hurrying down the same steep—in one instance the two joined at the bottom, travelled side by side in the same track, remaining distinct though joined together, as if each were jealous of its own character. Yielding to mild necessity, they slowly blended, ere both, in turbulent disrespect, were swallowed up by the master-torrent."

Rare indeed are those whose descriptive writing combines vision and accuracy and charm. The passage I have quoted evokes not a generalised impression of mountain torrents, but a precise picture of the contrast between different manifestations of hill streams. Dorothy's passionate delight in mountain beauty was partly the cause and partly the consequence of her accuracy of observation. And because every line that she wrote about mountains was the result of accurate observation, the reader always feels that she is describing not mountains in general but mountains in particular. "One star differeth from another in glory," and every sunset is different, but how difficult it is to differentiate one particular sunset from all other sunsets. Here is Dorothy Wordsworth's description of sunset at Grindelwald: "The sunshine had long deserted the valley, and was quitting the summits of the mountains behind the village; but red hues, dark as the red of rubies, settled in the clouds, and lingered there after the mountains had lost all but their cold whiteness and the black hue of the crags. The gloomy grandeur of this spectacle harmonised with the melancholy of the vale; yet it was *heavenly* glory that hung over those cold mountains."

Here is a passage from her journal, written at Meiringen, an evocative miniature :

"We reached the Inn at a little after seven o'clock. The sky became very gloomy ; frequent claps of thunder with vivid lightning ; and, in the night, heavy rain. While I lay on my bed, the terrible solitudes of the Wetterhorn were revealed to me by fits—its black chasms, and snowy, and dark grey summits. All night, and all day, and for ever, the Vale of Meiringen is sounding with torrents.

"August 13th, Sunday, Meiringen. Rain over and the storm past away. Long before the sunshine had touched the top of any other mountain, the snow upon the Wetterhorn shone like silver, and its grey adamantine towers appeared in a soft splendour all their own. I looked in vain for the rosy tints of morning of which I had so often heard ; but they could not have been more beautiful than the silvery brightness."

Equally charming are her pen pictures of the people whom she met on her travels.

"We pursued our way towards the greater Scheidegg. . . . Further on, in a very shady and deep part of the lane, a fairy being appeared before us, a child not more than four years old, with outstretched arms, reaching almost from one bank of the lane to the other, while in each hand she held a shewy nosegay. The little creature had been sent out from a cottage, then unseen by us, in the adjoining field. She walked beside us, after giving in the same moment one of her posies to each, a work performed with a shy struggle (perhaps it was her first effort in barter or begging) she was pleased with our notice ; but ventured not to speak a word."

The moral which Dorothy Wordsworth draws from a chance encounter in an inn near Schwyz is a fascinating footnote to the history of the French invasion.

"A tall grave middle-aged woman had entered. . . . I found her seated, and could not but fix my eyes on her the moment I entered the room. A company of peasants of inferior rank were at supper at one end, we at our tea-table in a distant corner, and she, at a third table, ate her supper alone, being served with ceremony like a person of distinction. Not one of us, I am sure, can ever forget this gentlewoman (for such I must call her). The involuntary notice she drew from us did not seem absolutely to offend—yet I cannot say she was pleased with it. She seemed to be an adequate

representative of the Helvetian Matronage, as the Mother of the Gracchi might have been of the Roman, and some of our party were reminded, by her appearance and deportment, of the complaint made by the French, that, while stationed in this country, they could neither procure a mistress nor a spy."

Last but not least, Wordsworthians will enjoy the curious blend of realism and reverence with which she writes of her brother. It would be easy for a reader who knew Wordsworth only from his poetry to assume that he had a mind above material considerations. In point of fact, like many other idealists he could drive a hard bargain and he intensely disliked being over-reached. At Herzogenbuchsee, for instance, Wordsworth spent the night in the voiture rather than pay six francs for a bed. At Stans the driver demanded twenty-seven francs instead of the agreed eighteen francs, and refused to surrender the coats and cloaks of the party, which he "had locked up in a seat of the Char" till they paid. The ladies naturally were far more distressed at the prospect of losing their cloaks than of yielding to extortion, but Wordsworth, after assuring the "carman" that "if justice were to be had in Switzerland, he should feel the weight of it" bundled his party into a boat for Lucerne, where he laid a complaint against the errant carman, and pursued the matter with such energy that the coats and cloaks were returned and the carman sentenced to a month's imprisonment. "We hastened down," writes Dorothy, "to congratulate the conquerors, and give them due praise for the spirit which had carried them through the business, honestly confessing that we, by being willing to submit to imposition, rather than run the risk of losing our coats, should have betrayed our own countrymen, and not done our duty to the Swiss."

VI

Have I over-praised Dorothy Wordsworth? As a test of my judgment on the merits of her work, I have recently re-read Goethe's letters from Switzerland. It is not Dorothy Wordsworth but Goethe who suffers from the juxtaposition. Schiller fares even worse. Indeed the aptest comment on Schiller's *William Tell* is the Schiller memorial near Brunnen. Instead of wasting money on a marble memorial, the realistic Swiss emblazoned the name of Schiller in large letters on a solitary little rock, which rises some twenty feet

above the waters of Lake Lucerne. "You want the cheapest memorials. We have them," but Schiller deserved nothing better, for it is only too apparent that he had never seen the Alps.

The French in general and the Genevese in particular, made a notable contribution to the *early* literature of the mountains. Geneva, the Protestant Rome of the sixteenth century, and the headquarters of the League of Nations in the twentieth century, was the spiritual capital of the mountain cult in the eighteenth century. Rousseau, Bourrit and De Saussure were all citizens of Geneva. Cordially as Rousseau disliked the mountains, he was, as we have seen, in some sense the first prophet of the mountain cult. Bourrit loved mountains not for their ideological and controversial value but for themselves. He was, as de Beer remarks, "One of the first writers to find something to say about the Alps other than that they were high or beautiful," and one of the first to discover that the key to the evocative writing which *differentiates* one mountainscape from another is to be sought for in the skilful use of simile and metaphors. True his similes are, for the most part, unimpressive, and some are absurd, but, at least, he tried.

By far the greatest name in the early history of mountaineering is that of the Genevese scientist, De Saussure, the father of Alpine geology. He has also been described with pardonable exaggeration as the father both of mountaineering and of mountain literature. It was in 1761 that De Saussure offered a reward to the first Chamoniard who should find the way to the summit of Mont Blanc, and it was in 1786 that this reward was claimed by Jacques Balmat who accompanied Dr. Paccard, the local doctor, to the summit of Mont Blanc. The ascent was repeated by De Saussure in the following year. His book *Voyages dans les Alpes* had an immense influence which might have proved even more decisive had not the Napoleonic wars had a disastrous effect on mountaineering. Had there been no revolution and no Napoleonic wars, the Mother of Alpine Clubs might have been founded at the turn of the century in Geneva, rather than forty years later in England.

De Saussure was a scientist and his mountain passages are sober and restrained rather than "evocative," but his consciousness of the sublime grandeur of the upper regions is expressed with great dignity and power in the following description of a night passed on the Tête-Rousse. "Le ciel était parfaitement pur et sans nuages ; la vapeur ne se voyait plus que dans le fond des vallées :

les étoiles brillantes, mais dépouillées de toute espèce de scintillations, répandaient sur les sommets des montagnes une lueur extrêmement faible et pâle, mais qui suffisait cependant à faire distinguer les masses et les distances. Le repos et le profond silence qui régnaient dans cette vaste étendue, agrandi encore par l'imagination, m'inspiraient une sorte de terreur, il me semblait que j'avais survécu seul à l'univers, et que je voyais son cadavre étendu sous mes pieds."

Dr. Engel writes in terms of high praise, of the mountain writings of Ramond de Carbonnière, the Pyrenean pioneer, "Ce qui frappe tout d'abord, dans son œuvre, c'est la perfection de ses descriptions. . . . Les teintes, les valeurs de lumière et d'ombres sont saisies comme par un peintre." I cannot agree with this verdict, and am unimpressed by Ramond's description of the view from the Joch Pass which Dr. Engel cites as characteristic of Ramond's writing at its best. "Devant nous fuyait une longue et profonde vallée, couverte dans toutes ses parties d'une neige dont la blancheur était sans tache. Ça et là perçaient quelques rochers de granit, qui semblaient autant d'îles jetées sur la face d'un océan; les sommets épouvantables qui bordaient cette vallée, couverts comme elles de neige et de glaciers, réfléchissaient les rayons de soleil sous toutes les nuances qui sont entre le blanc et l'azur."

All this seems to me mere rhetoric, with no power to evoke a picture of the scenes described. The contrast between the French and British contribution to mountain literature is far more striking in poetry than in prose. Lamartine, the outstanding example of a French poet of the Romantic period who chose mountains for his theme, combined like Wordsworth a sympathy for mountains with a sympathy for Revolution. Unlike Wordsworth he was not content with a long-distance sympathy with revolt, for he faced great risks and played an active part in the Revolution of 1848. As to his mountain poetry let the reader judge for himself.

"Plus les vents déchaînés hurlent d'horribles cris
Plus l'avalanche gronde et roule de délires,
Plus la nuit s'épaissit sous un ciel bas et terne . . .
Plus nous concentrons dans la roche qui tremble,
Plus nous sentons la main de Dieu qui nous rassemble."

Dr. Engel points out the superficial resemblances between Lamartine's *Jocelyn* and Wordsworth's *Prelude*, and adds "on sent

l'abîme qui sépare ces deux poèmes." "Lamartine's mountains," continues Dr. Engel, "are intellectual creations, where the genuine data play an insignificant role; they preach a moral sermon, but, it would seem, by the sole permission of the author." Perhaps this may enable us to appreciate one of the basic differences between French and English poetry. Even in the case of Lamartine, poet of the Romantic Movement, the restraint of the classical tradition is so strong that in the poems in which both Nature and man are his theme, he devotes himself to man, consecrates to him all his psychological penetration, and sees only in Nature a framework very beautiful perhaps but so unimportant that the most capricious treatment is permissible. The mystery of things has no attraction for him. The greatest poets of the nineteenth century failed in their interpretation of the mountains. The insignificance of the descriptions or the thoughts suggested to the French Romantics by the Alps has a profound cause. . . .

"The literature of the (French) Romantic period, like the literature of the Classical period, contributed no enduring element to the understanding of the mountains."

CHAPTER VII

RUSKIN AND THE ALPS

I

THE Romantic Movement was not only a reaction against the tyranny of Greece in architecture. It was also an unacknowledged Renaissance of the Hebrew attitude to Nature. No man had a greater influence than John Ruskin in substituting the Hebraic for the Greek attitude to mountains, and few writers have been more profoundly influenced by the Hebraic scriptures. "I have next," writes Ruskin, "with deeper gratitude to chronicle what I owe to my mother for the resolutely consistent lessons which so exercised me in the Scriptures as to make every word of them familiar to my ear in habitual music,—yet in that familiarity revered, as transcending all thought, and ordaining all conduct."

The General Index to the magnificent Library Edition of Ruskin cites nearly 3,000 separate scriptural quotations, many of which were quoted again and again. Apart from direct and indirect quotations there are innumerable passages in Ruskin which could only have been written by a man whose thought and whose style had been shaped by a profound study of the Bible. As, for instance, the famous opening sentence of *The Stones of Venice*: "Since first the dominion of men was asserted over the ocean, three thrones, of mark beyond all others, have been set upon its sands: the thrones of Tyre, Venice, and England. Of the First of these great powers only the memory remains; of the Second, the ruin; the Third which inherits their greatness, if it forget their example, may be led through prouder eminence to less pitied destruction."

Ruskin, Anglo-Scottish by race, was spiritually the last of the Hebrew prophets. "It was the moral fervour in Ruskin," writes Sir Max Beerbohm, "that gave such intensity to his noble style. By reason of it he is, just as a writer, worth a hundred of philosophical gents like you and me. It narrowed him as a thinker and put him again and again in the wrong. But how gloriously wrong and narrow he was. And when he was right, how divinely! I wish we were a little like him."

The passion for social justice, which was rarely voiced by the Greeks, finds eloquent expression in the Pentateuch, the Psalms, the Prophets

and in the New Testament, but was dormant in the England of Ruskin's youth, which was corrupted by the vilest of heresies, the belief that even God was powerless to modify the pitiless workings of economic law. In 1832 Lord Althorp, leader of the Liberal Government, explained in the House of Commons that the "system of poor relief was contrary to the principles of political economy which even prohibited the exercise of private charity." His contemporary Malthus, a kindly man and an Anglican clergyman, insisted that if children were born in excess of the requirements of the labour market, the father should be told that "the laws of Nature had doomed him and his family to starve."

Against the heresy that God might reign but could never rule, the heresy of constitutional theism, Ruskin never ceased to protest with what Carlyle called his "divine rage against iniquity, falseness and baseness." In 1860, when Ruskin began to develop his theories of Social and Political Economy, labour was unorganised and without security. There was no eight-hours day, no early-closing, no old-age pensions, no free State elementary education, no free libraries. The educational system dates from the seventies, the Trades Union Act from 1871.

In the sixties the defence of the underprivileged was as unfashionable as the defence of conservative principles in 1944. Ruskin never equated generous sentiments with generous actions, and would have been the first to insist that the denunciation of avarice was no substitute for personal charity to the distressed. At the beginning of the eighties he had dissipated the fortune which he had inherited from his father, a prosperous wine merchant, and was dependent on the royalties which he received from his books. He never lacked money for anything he wanted, but extravagances of generosity are not universal even among those who have more money than they know what to do with. £37,000 of his fortune had been spent in gifts and unrepaid loans to relations; many thousands more in gifts to needy artists and good causes.

Ruskin was more concerned with levelling-up than with levelling-down. He travelled round England with his father who "went the round of his country customers." "I thus saw nearly all the noble-men's houses in England; in reverent and healthy delight of uncovetous admiration . . . perceiving that it would not make Brunswick Square in the least more pleasantly habitable to pull Warwick Castle down. And at this day, though I have kind invita-

tions enough to visit America, I could not, even for a couple of months, live in a country so miserable as to possess no castles."

He described himself as "a Communist of the old school—reddest of the red," but he does not seem to have been accepted as such by Marx and Engel, perhaps because the Paris Commune of 1871 which aroused the enthusiasm of Marx, caused very little pleasure to Ruskin. *The Times* had reported the burning of the Louvre, which in fact survived, and also the destruction of the Palais des Tuileries, the Palais de Justice, and the Hôtel de Ville with its priceless treasures of Art.

"Nor can it be less sufficiently encouraging to you," he writes, "to see how with a sufficiently curative quantity of Liberty, you may defend yourselves against all danger of overproduction, especially in art . . . we Communists of the old school think that our property belongs to everybody, and everybody's property to us ; so of course I thought the Louvre belonged to me as much as to the Parisians, and expected they would have sent word over to me, being an Art Professor, to ask whether I wanted it burnt down. But no message or intimation to that effect ever reached me."

This passage illustrates the irony which the last of the Hebrew prophets shared with his great predecessors. The utterances of a prophet are often distinguished by irony and even by wit, but less often by humour, for as Ruskin observes, "he whose heart is at once fixed upon heaven, and open to earth so as to apprehend the importance of heavenly doctrine and the compass of human sorrow has little disposition for mirth." To his publisher, Mr. George Smith, Ruskin wrote on October 28th, 1846, "I ought before to have thanked you for your obliging present of *Wit and Humour*—two characters of intellect in which I am so eminently deficient, as never even to have ventured upon a conjecture respecting their real nature."

I find it difficult to believe that the author of such a letter could be deficient in wit, but, be that as it may, the contemptuous candour with which Ruskin disclaims possession of the one quality with which even the dreariest of bores so often believe themselves to be endowed is very pleasing. Humour which is at a discount in creative centuries is absurdly overpraised in an age of disillusion and artistic decay, as if it were the one thing left to brag about. I once asked a Siamese prince what he had found most surprising in England.

He replied, after a pause, "the fact that angry correspondents so often end their letters to the Press, 'Thank God, I have a sense of humour.' In Siam we take such things for granted and do not thank God that we possess a sense of humour or a sense of smell."

Ruskin would have endorsed Marx' efforts to increase the material rewards of the worker, but he was more concerned with improving the nature of rather than increasing the rewards of work. His sociological principles are closely related to his æsthetic criteria, as emerges very clearly in one of the noblest essays in the English language, the chapter on "The Nature of Gothic" in *The Stones of Venice*.

"The Greek gave to the lower workman no subject which he could not perfectly execute. The Assyrian gave him subjects which he could only execute imperfectly, but fixed a legal standard for his imperfection. The workman was, in both systems, a slave. But in the mediæval, or especially Christian, system of ornament, this slavery is done away with altogether; Christianity having recognised, in small things as well as great, the individual value of every soul . . . go forth again to gaze upon the old cathedral front, where you have smiled so often at the fantastic ignorance of the old sculptors; examine once more those ugly goblins, and formless monsters, and stern statues, anatomiless and rigid; but do not mock at them, for they are signs of the life and liberty of every workman who struck the stone; a freedom of thought, and rank in scale of being, such as no laws, no charters, no charities can secure; but which it must be the first aim of all Europe at this day to regain for her children."

The prophet must be judged not only by the vehemence of his attacks on contemporary evils, but also by the accuracy with which he predicts the consequences of those evils. "It is verily this degradation of the operative into a machine, which, more than any other evil of the times, is leading the mass of the nations everywhere into vain, incoherent, destructive struggling for a freedom of which they cannot explain the nature to themselves. . . . It is not that men are pained by the scorn of the upper classes, but they cannot endure their own; for they feel that the kind of labour to which they are condemned is verily a degrading one, and makes them less than men. . . . We have much studied and much perfected, of late, the great civilised invention of the division of labour; only we give it a false name. It is not, truly speaking, the labour that is

divided ; but the men : divided into mere segments of men—broken into small fragments and crumbs of life ; so that all the little piece of intelligence that is left in a man is not enough to make a pin, or a nail, but exhausts itself in making the point of a pin or the head of a nail.”

Macaulay, who rejoiced in the hope that “ the roofs and chimneys of a new Manchester may one day rise in the wilds of Connemara,” had converted the Victorians to the great Liberal Faith that progress is to be measured by the speed at which peasants can be turned into factory hands. Ruskin was therefore condemned as a crank and a faddist by his enlightened contemporaries. Eighty years after the passage which I have just quoted was first published, two eminent citizens of that progressive country across the Atlantic endorsed all that Ruskin had written in condemnation of industrialism. Mr. Herbert Agar in that brilliant book *America Explained* insists that “ most men cannot be at peace with themselves when living in huge cities where the homeliest details of life are dehumanised, when the daily work of their hands is perfunctory and uncreative,” and Dr. Alexis Carrel, one of the greatest of contemporary scientists and Nobel prize winner, repeats Ruskin’s indictment in his book *Man the Unknown* :

“ The worker spends his life repeating the same gesture thousands of times each day. He manufactures only single parts. He never makes the complete object. He is not allowed to use his intelligence. He is the blind horse plodding round and round the whole day long to draw water from a well. Industrialism forbids man the very mental activities which could bring him every day some joy. In sacrificing mind to matter modern civilisation has perpetrated a monstrous error.”

Again Ruskin displayed not only courage and originality but also great prescience in attacking the sacred dogma, which none but he dared to question, that gold was the only possible basis for a currency. “ Ruskin,” writes Mr. R. H. Wilenski, “ foresaw our present troubles and proposed solutions on the lines now being put forward by the American economists as ‘ Technocracy ’ and by English economists like F. W. Pethick-Lawrence who has recently advocated a Multiple-commodity standard. . . . In *Munera Pulveris III* he wrote ; ‘ . . . nor should the frame of a national currency vibrate with every miser’s panic, and every merchant’s imprudence. . . . There are two methods of avoiding this inse-

curity. . . . One is to base the currency on substances of truer intrinsic value ; the other, to base it on several substances instead of one.' ”

II

“ It is the chief provocation of my life,” wrote Ruskin to Susan Beever, “ to be called a ‘ word painter ’ instead of a thinker.” Ruskin should have added that there is no necessary antithesis between word-painting and thinking. On the contrary, if a man’s thought is confused he is unlikely to paint well either in words or in water-colours, but Ruskin had a legitimate grievance against readers who were so enchanted by the form of his writings that they ignored the content. “ I have had what, in many respects, I boldly call the misfortune to set my words sometimes prettily together ; not without a foolish vanity in the poor knack that I had of doing so : until I was heavily punished for this pride, by finding that many people thought of the words only, and cared nothing for their meaning.”

Ruskin was first and foremost a thinker, a rationalist in the proper sense of that much abused word. From the first great premise that God not only exists but rules, he deduced not only his sociology, but also his æsthetic criticism and his interpretation of mountain beauty.

Art is noble in so far as it interprets truth, ignoble in so far as it interprets falsehood. *The Stones of Venice* is a sermon on this theme. Ruskin believed that whereas Gothic architecture was the noblest interpretation in stone of the Christian faith, Renaissance architecture expressed the revolt of pagan pride against Christian humility, and of pagan infidelity against Christian faith. The Venice of the Gothic Ducal Palace had not begun to question the Christian truths. The Venice of the Palace Rezzonico was already half pagan. The same change can be discerned in art. “ In old times, men used their powers of painting to show the objects of faith ; in later times, they used the objects of faith that they might show their powers of painting.”

“ Ruskin,” wrote Horatio Brown, who knew Venice as few have known her, “ carried his theories further than history, faithfully studied, would warrant, but in most cases he had reason on his side. It may be doubted if the year 1418 and the death of Carlo Zeno mark categorically the point at which the history of Venice begins to decline and fall ; but, on the other hand, the transition





LAKE GENEVE. (*Ruskin, see p. 106.*)

from the Gothic style to that of the Renaissance undoubtedly coincides with a radical change in the character of the Venetian people and the views and aspirations of the Republic."

Ruskin's theocentric æsthetics provoked an inevitable reaction, but whereas Ruskin defended his position by reasoning, the prophets who preached the gospel of "art for art's sake" appealed only to the emotions. "What is art?" asked Samuel Butler, "that it should have a sake?" Ruskin never used a word to save himself the trouble of thinking. He would never, for instance, have talked, as a distinguished modern critic talks, of "significant form" without stopping to ask, "significant of what?"

Ruskin was unfair to the Renaissance, and the late Geoffrey Scott's *Architecture of Humanism*, one of the very few works on architecture of which the word "genius" can be used without absurdity, is a valuable corrective to the exaggerations of Ruskin's indictment, but even Scott, that urbane humanist, ranges himself with Ruskin against those who seek a complete divorce between æsthetic and ethical standards. "For, in the last resort," writes Mr. Scott, "great art will be distinguished from that which is merely æsthetically clever by a nobility that, in its final analysis, is moral; or, rather, the nobility which in life we call 'moral' is itself æsthetic. . . . The 'dignity' of architecture is the same 'dignity' that we recognise in character."

The rediscovery of Ruskin by the young intellectuals of to-day is very largely due to the influence of Proust.

"Art," wrote Ruskin, "has always destroyed the power and life of those who pursued it for pleasure only." Proust no less decisively than Ruskin, repudiates the doctrine of art for art's sake and insists that just as those who pursue pleasure for its own sake only achieve boredom, so the search for æsthetic pleasure as an end in itself is condemned to failure.

"Or, pour des raisons dont la recherche toute métaphysique dépasserait une simple étude d'art, la Beauté ne peut pas être aimée d'une manière féconde si on l'aime seulement pour les plaisirs qu'elle donne. Et de même que la recherche du bonheur pour lui-même n'atteint que l'ennui, et qu'il faut pour le trouver chercher autre chose que lui, de même le plaisir esthétique nous est donné par surcroît si nous aimons la Beauté pour elle-même, comme quelque chose de réel existant en dehors de nous et infiniment plus important que la joie qu'elle nous donne. Et, très loin

d'avoir été un dilettante ou un esthète, Ruskin fut précisément le contraire, un de ces hommes à la Carlyle, averti par leur génie de la vanité de tout plaisir et, en même temps, de la présence auprès d'eux d'une réalité éternelle, intuitivement perçue par l'inspiration. Le talent leur est donné comme un pouvoir de fixer cette réalité à la toute-puissance et à l'éternité de laquelle, avec enthousiasme et comme obéissante à un commandement de la conscience, ils consacrent, pour lui donner quelque valeur, leur vie éphémère."

III

John Ruskin was born on February 8th, 1819, when Napoleon was still at St. Helena. He died during the Boer war on January 20th, 1900. No Victorian had a greater influence on contemporary thought than John Ruskin, or exercised an influence over a wider range of diverse activities.

The thesis of his first great book was defined on the title page: *Modern Painters: Their Superiority in the Art of Landscape Painting To all The Ancient Masters*. Ruskin's influence in converting England to the merits of the moderns has been exaggerated. Turner had been an Academician for forty years when *Modern Painters* appeared, and Ruskin's praise of his later work, which had been violently attacked, did not begin to have effect until seven years after Turner's death and fifteen years after *Modern Painters* had appeared. Again, as Mr. Wilenski has shown, it is incorrect to credit Ruskin with the discovery of the Pre-Raphaelites. But though Ruskin did not discover Rossetti he certainly rediscovered Carpaccio. "We can forget," wrote Proust, "the services which he rendered to Hunt, to Rossetti, to Millais; but we cannot forget what he did for Giotto, for Carpaccio, for Bellini. His divine work was not to raise up the living but to revive the dead. "*Son œuvre divine ne fut pas de susciter des vivants, mais de ressusciter des morts.*" Ruskin did not provoke the Gothic Revival, which had begun before the turn of the century, and his influence on that revival was not wholly felicitous. Indeed, he described the neo-Venetian Gothic buildings as "accursed Frankenstein monsters of indirectly my own making." "There is hardly," he wrote to the *Pall Mall Gazette* on March 15th, 1872, "a public-house near the Crystal Palace but sells its gin and bitters under pseudo-Venetian capitals copied from the Church of the Madonna of Health or of Miracles." Ruskin's *œuvre divine* found

expression not in the formation of contemporary architecture, but in the interpretation of the past. There are still many people to whom Gothic does not appeal, but Ruskin has made it impossible for any educated people to use the word "Gothic" as the equivalent for uncouth or barbaric. No man made a greater contribution than John Ruskin to the revolution in taste which opened the eyes of the blind to the glory, not only of our Gothic but also of our Byzantine heritage.

"Of all the towns in Italy," wrote Gibbon to his stepmother on April 22nd, 1765, "I am the least satisfied with Venice. Objects which are only singular without being pleasing produce a momentary surprise which soon gives way to satiety and disgust. Old, and in general, ill-built houses, ruined pictures, and stinking ditches, dignified with the pompous denomination of canals, a fine bridge spoilt by two rows of houses upon it, and a large square decorated with the worst architecture I ever saw." The "worst architecture" is the Byzantine St. Mark's, and the Gothic Ducal Palace. Disraeli agreed with Gibbon. In *Contarini Fleming* he expressed his admiration for the Renaissance buildings and his dislike of the "barbarous although picturesque buildings called the Ducal Palace."

The eighteenth-century attitude to Byzantine architecture prevailed until Ruskin wrote *The Stones of Venice*. "The architecture of St. Mark's at Venice," wrote the *Daily News* reviewer, "has from of old been the butt for students . . . but Mr. Ruskin comes and assures us . . ."

Ruskin's influence was felt in a wide range of projects, the revival of pageantry, old-age pensions, a graded income-tax and super-tax, the formation of a fund to supplement Government resources for the purchase of art treasures, in the institution of people's concerts, in the protection of ancient buildings, in the National Trust, and in measures to ensure access to mountains. *Laissez-faire* Liberalism never recovered from Ruskin's assault. In his attack on usury and in his insistence that a man had only a just title to such property as he could skilfully use, "property to whom proper," he anticipated many of the social doctrines developed by Mr. Hilaire Belloc in that most prophetic of books, *The Servile State*.

It was partly because Ruskin was widely read as a critic of art and of architecture that his influence on the development of the mountain cult was so great. Men who read *Modern Painters* because they were interested in art, were introduced into a new world of

mountain beauty. Ruskin was not only a *word*-painter. His mountain paintings and sketches have at least the great virtue of fidelity. He was the first to publish an accurate drawing of the Matterhorn and the first to photograph that peak, but there is charm and beauty as well as accuracy in many of his mountain sketches, such as, for instance, *The Head of the Lake Geneva*, which is reproduced in this book.

But it was Ruskin's prose, rather than his paintings, which were decisive. "Many people," wrote Leslie Stephen, "had tried their hands on Alpine descriptions since Saussure; but Ruskin's chapters seemed to have the freshness of a new revelation. The fourth volume of *Modern Painters* infected me and other early members of the Alpine Club with an enthusiasm for which I hope we are still grateful." "Ruskin," wrote Mr. Douglas Freshfield, a President of the Alpine Club, "saw and understood mountains, and taught our generation to understand them in a way no one—none even of those who had been born under their shadow—had ever understood them before. . . . No writer has added so much to our enjoyment of Alpine scenery as Ruskin."

Ruskin was one of the first to discover the beauty of the Alps in winter. "As for anybody's," he writes to his father on November 25th, 1861, "coming to Switzerland except in November, it is the merest nonsense. Yesterday afternoon was—not cloudless, but resplendent with golden clouds; and the Rigi—what with its green pines, its naturally russet rock, and its grey and purple masses of stripped beech wood, with their red fallen leaves all staining the ground beneath—was just like a great violet and rosy agate, studded with emeralds."

And on Christmas morning, 1861, he writes: "The finest things one can see in summer are nothing, compared to winter scenery among the Alps when the weather is fine. Pilate looked as if it was entirely constructed of frosted silver, like Geneva filigree work—lighted by golden sunshine with long purple shadows; and the entire chain of the Alps rosy beyond."

IV

Ruskin's non-Alpine activities are relevant to the discussion of his attitude to mountains, and those who have attempted to isolate Ruskin the mountain lover from Ruskin the art critic or Ruskin the

sociologist have contributed little of real value to our understanding of the greatest of mountain prophets. Ruskin himself passes with no consciousness of irrelevancy from mountains to political science :

" It can hardly be necessary to point out how these natural ordinances seem intended to teach us the great truths which are the basis of all political science ; how the polishing friction which separates, the affection that binds, and the affliction that fuses and confirms, are accurately symbolised by the processes to which the several ranks of hills appear to owe their present aspect."

Or again from architecture and art to mountain form. One of the noblest passages in Alpine literature is inserted into *The Nature of Gothic*, and the qualification on which he was elected to the Alpine Club was *Modern Painters* (Vol. IV) !

In retrospect Ruskin was better pleased with his mountain writings than with his contributions to Art criticism. " The subject of the sculpture of mountains," he wrote in 1884, " into the forms of perpetual beauty which they miraculously receive from God was first taken up by me in the fourth volume of *Modern Painters* and the elementary principles of it, there stated, form the most valuable and least faultful part of the book." In the last words of *Modern Painters*, he reaffirms the integral relationship between his mountain and his æsthetic *credo* : " And now, in writing beneath the cloudless peace of the snows of Chamouni, what must be the really final words of the book which their beauty inspired and their strength guided, I am able, with yet happier and calmer heart than ever heretofore, to enforce its simplest assurance of Faith, that the knowledge of what is beautiful leads on, and is the first step, to the knowledge of the things which are lovely and of good report ; and that the laws, the life, and the joy of beauty in the material world of God, are as eternal and sacred parts of His creation as, in the world of spirits, virtue ; and in the world of angels, praise."

Ruskin's mountain doctrine is indeed unintelligible if divorced from that theocentric context, which it has been the convention among Alpine critics resolutely to ignore. Ruskin did not regard mountains as fortuitous protuberances, whose form was solely determined by material forces. On the contrary they were " appointed for three great offices," to give motion to water, to give motion to air, and to cause perpetual change in the soils of the earth. " But the feeding of the rivers and the purifying of the winds are the least of the services appointed to the hills. To fill

the thirst of the human heart for the beauty of God's working—to startle its lethargy with the deep and pure agitation of astonishment, are their higher missions.” Again the ethical criterion by means of which Ruskin demonstrates the sociological and æsthetic superiority of the Gothic is also invoked, with infinitely less plausibility, to differentiate between the influences of different types of rock. Thus he contends that landscape composed of crystalline as opposed to sedimentary rocks, “cannot become muddy, or foul, or unwholesome. The streams which descend through it may indeed be opaque, and as white as cream with the churned substance of the granite ; but their water, after this substance has been thrown down, is good and pure, and their shores are not slimy or treacherous, but of pebbles, or of firm and sparkling sand. The quiet streams, springs, and lakes among them are always of exquisite clearness, and the sea which washes a granite coast is as unsullied as a flawless emerald. It is remarkable to what extent this intense purity in the country seems to influence the character of the inhabitants. It is almost impossible to make a cottage built in a granite country look absolutely miserable. Rough it may be—neglected, cold, full of aspect of hardship—but it can never look *foul*, no matter how carelessly, how indolently its inhabitants may live, the water at their doors will not stagnate, the soil beneath their feet will not allow itself to be trodden into slime. . . . And, as far as I remember, the inhabitants of granite countries have always a force and healthiness of character, more or less abated or modified, of course, according to the other circumstances of their life, but still definitely belonging to them, as distinguished from the inhabitants of the less pure districts of the hills.”

v

In the course of many long visits to the Alps, Ruskin developed into an enthusiastic mountain walker, “by keeping myself in constant training I was able at last to walk with the best guides and knock up all the bad ones.” Ruskin was engrossed in the study of mountain geology, and in the course of his geological scrambles he covered a great deal of ground on the Aiguille Bouchard and along the base of the Chamonix aiguilles. He seems to have enjoyed the elementary scrambling encountered on the easy way up the Riffelhorn, which he climbed in 1849, but he never crossed

the barrier which separates the mountain walker from the mountaineer. At the age of 25 he climbed the Buet, an easy mountain, 10,164 ft. above the sea. "Found myself much fatigued by the time we reached what I imagined was the Col—found it wasn't; saw another long climb before me and lost courage. . . . I had a most uncomfortable hour of exhaustion and dread of fatigue-fever. . . ." Many years later he wrote in *Præterita*: "On the 29th I went up the Buet and down to Sixt, where I found myself very stiff and tired, and determined that the Alps were, on the whole, best seen from below." A. L. Mumm, whose interesting contribution to the *Alpine Journal* (June, 1919) contains Ruskin's account of the Buet expedition, offers no evidence for the mountaineering aspirations with which he credits Ruskin and adds: "I am convinced that it must have been a matter of 'severe self denial' to him to put such aspirations aside. But the most insurmountable of all obstacles stood in the way, the wishes of his parents." It was, however, only in his youth that Ruskin deferred to his parents. At the age of 43 he writes to Lady Trevelyan, "I am in a state of subdued fury whenever I am at home. I must have a house of my own now somewhere." A few weeks later he escaped from home and wrote to his father from Milan, "the *only* thing you can do for me is to let me follow out my work in my own way and in peace. All interference with me torments me and makes me quite as ill as any amount of work." Parental interference could scarcely be more decisively repudiated. Ruskin was only forty-three when he wrote this letter, quite young enough to climb if he had really entertained those mountaineering aspirations with which Mr. Mumm so gratuitously credited him. Ruskin never concealed his aspirations or his grievances. If he had ever felt the passion to climb he would have not failed to record this passion in his diary, letters, or other writings, and if his father had kept him from the mountains this fact would have emerged in his catalogue of filial grievances. "You thwarted me," he writes to his father, "in all the earnest fire of passion and life," but the mountains are not mentioned in the detail with which he supports this indictment.

VI

In *Sesame and Lilies* Ruskin attacked his fellow countrymen as despisers of art, literature, science and nature. "All true lovers

of natural beauty," he wrote in the Preface to the Second Edition, "hold it in reverence so deep, that they would as soon think of climbing the pillars of the choir of Beauvais for a gymnastic exercise, as of making a playground of Alpine snow," and in the body of the book he writes : "The French revolutionists made stables of the cathedrals of France ; you have made race-courses of the cathedrals of the earth . . . the Alps themselves, which your own poets used to love so reverently, you look upon as soaped poles in a bear-garden, which you set yourselves to climb and slide down again, with ' shrieks of delight.' When you are past shrieking, having no human articulate voice to say you are glad with, you fill the quietude of their valleys with gunpowder blasts, and rush home, red with cutaneous eruption of conceit, and voluble with convulsive hiccough of self-satisfaction."

Ruskin loved not only the Swiss scenery but also the Swiss traditions and the Swiss people. He dreaded for their sake what he called the "consuming white leprosy of new hotels and perfumer's shops," and resented on their behalf the type of mountaineer who had no interest whatever in the cultural associations of a country which he only visited in search of sport. Instead, "we have taught them," he complained, "all the foulness of the modern lust of wealth . . . of the ancient architecture and most expressive beauty of the country there is now little vestige left ; and it is one of the few reasons which console me for the advance of life, that I am old enough to remember the time when the sweet waves of the Reuss and Limmat (now foul with the refuse of manufacture) were as crystalline as the heaven above them ; when her pictured bridges and embattled towers ran unbroken round Lucerne ; when the Rhone flowed in deep-green, softly dividing currents round the wooden ramparts of Geneva ; and when from the marble roof of the western vault of Milan, I could watch the Rose of Italy flush in the first morning light, before a human foot had sullied its summit."

In my boyhood at Grindelwald I often heard Pfarrer Straser denouncing the corrupting influence of the foreign tourists and I am therefore not surprised by Ruskin's assertion that his Swiss friends "spoke with chief fear of the influx of English wealth, gradually connecting all industry with the wants and ways of strangers, and inviting all idleness to depend upon their casual help ; thus gradually resolving the ancient consistency and pastoral sim-

plicity of the mountain life into the two irregular trades of inn-keeper and mendicant."

One can agree with Ruskin that "the mountains of the earth are its natural cathedrals, or natural altars, overlaid with gold, and bright with brodered work of flowers, and with their clouds resting on them as the smoke of a continual sacrifice," and yet dissent from his conclusion that the mountaineer is a vandal desecrating with his presence the holy places of the hills, and though I do not question the sincerity of his attack on the Alpine Club, I suspect that his disapproval was qualified by envy. I think that in his heart of hearts he knew that the mountains only revealed their more intimate secrets to those who have qualified for initiation by the discipline of toil, discomfort and not infrequent danger. It may be that the mountaineer reinforced by his example Ruskin's recurring suspicion that the quality of his life would have been improved by an ascetic element. "I have called Ruskin a great man," writes Mr. Wilenski, "in the sense that he was a good man whose goodness was on a scale to be of use to a great number of other people, and I have called his social conscience the finest thing about him . . . he was a man who, it seems to me, had only one fault in his character—self-indulgence. . . . I can find no trace of meanness in him, no cruelty, no greed ; I can find no record of a word spoken or a thing done in spite, or for revenge, or with deliberate attempt to wound. His behaviour when his wife deserted him, and always afterwards in regard to her, was perfect. He had physical courage also. In his boyhood he was bitten on the lip by a dog, but he was never afraid of animals, and was always kind to them ; he picked up a wounded buzzard, and felt for its wound and dressed it, when his secretaries were frightened of its beak. He made friends whenever he wanted to and kept them all his life. But his self-indulgence was a definite weakness in his character."

As indeed Ruskin recognised. One of his complaints against his parents is that they encouraged this trait. "You fed me effeminately," he writes to his father, "and luxuriously to that extent that I actually now could not travel in rough countries without taking a cook with me."

Ruskin realised the educative value of danger. The Preface to the Second Edition of *Sesame and Lilies* which was published shortly after the Matterhorn accident, contains an effective and temperate reply to the critics of mountaineering. "No blame

ought to attach to the Alpine tourist for incurring danger . . . some experience of distinct peril, and the acquirements of habits of quick and calm action in its presence, are necessary elements at some period of life, in the formation of manly character." In a letter to his father from Chamounix (1863) he writes: "That question of the moral effect of danger is a very curious one; but this I know and find, practically, that if you come to a dangerous place, and turn back from it, though it may have been perfectly right and wise to do so, still your *character* has suffered some slight deterioration; you are to that extent weaker, more lifeless, more effeminate, more liable to passion and error in future; whereas if you go through with the danger though it may have been apparently wrong and foolish to encounter it, you come out of the encounter a stronger and better man, fitter for every sort of work and trial, and *nothing but danger* produces this effect."

In 1868 he was induced by a friend to attend the winter dinner of the Alpine Club. "He declined to speak," writes Leslie Stephen, "and at first looked at us as rather questionable characters, but rapidly thawed, and became not only courteous, but cordially appreciative of our motives. I think he called us 'fine young men.' Shortly after the dinner he joined the Alpine Club and remained a member for many years."

VII

Ruskin was often more successful in his interpretation of the majesty and sublimity of the mountains than in *differentiating* the scene which he is describing from similar scenes. Consider for instance the famous description of the Zmutt glacier above Zermatt. "Higher up the ice opens into broad white fields and furrows, hard and dry, scarcely fissured at all, except just under the Cervin, and forming a silent and solemn causeway, paved, as it seems, with white marble from side to side; broad enough for the march of an army in line of battle, but quiet as a street of tombs in a buried city, and bordered on each hand by ghostly cliffs of that faint granite purple which seems, in its far-away height, as unsubstantial as the dark blue that bounds it; the whole scene so changeless and soundless; so removed, not merely from the presence of men, but even from their thoughts; so destitute of all life of tree or herb, and so immeasurable in its lonely brightness of majestic death, that it looks

like a world from which not only the human, but the spiritual, presences had perished, and the last of its archangels, building the great mountains for their monuments, had laid themselves down in the sunlight to an eternal rest, each in his white shroud."

This passage tells us little about the Zmutt glacier in particular, but a great deal about the austere solitudes of the glacier world in general.

My love for Ruskin's mountain writings has survived the discovery that however pre-eminent he may be as an interpreter of mountain majesty in general, he has been surpassed in the art of evoking in words a particular mountain scene. I find it difficult to judge him dispassionately because he has a power which no other writer possesses of restoring my memory of the summers which I spent as a child on the shores of Lake Lucerne. My imagination had been fired by the heroism of William Tell and of those who held the pass at Morgarten long before I had heard of Agincourt or Waterloo, and when I wish to recover the visionary gleam of Switzerland's romantic past, it is not *The Playground of Europe* which I take down from my shelves, but *Modern Painters* or *Præterita*. "A sort of triumphant shriek—like all the railway whistles going off at once at Clapham Junction—has gone up from the Fooldom of Europe at the destruction of the myth of William Tell. To us every word of it was true—but mythically luminous with more than mortal truth; and here, under the black woods, glowed the visible, beautiful, tangible testimony to it in the purple larch timber, carved to exquisiteness by the joy of peasant life, continuous, motionless there in the pine shadow on its ancestral turf—unassailed and unassailing, in the blessedness of righteous poverty, of religious peace. The myth of William Tell is destroyed forsooth, and you have tunnelled Gothard, and filled, it may be, the Bay of Uri—and it was all for you and your sake that the grapes dropped blood from the press of St. Jacob, and the pine club struck down horse and helm in the Morgarten glen."

And it is to Ruskin that I turn for a just appreciation of the Swiss.

"There has been much dispute respecting the character of the Swiss, arising out of the difficulty which other nations had to understand their simplicity. They were assumed to be either romantically virtuous, or basely mercenary, when in fact they were neither heroic nor base, but were true hearted men, stubborn with more than any recorded stubbornness; not much regarding their lives, yet not

casting them causelessly away ; forming no high ideal of improvement, but never relaxing their grasp of a good they had once gained ; devoid of all romantic sentiment, yet loving with a practical and patient love that neither wearied nor forsook ; little given to enthusiasm in religion, but maintaining their faith in a purity which no worldliness deadened, and no hypocrisy soiled ; neither chivalrously generous nor pathetically humane, yet never pursuing their defeated enemies, not suffering their poor to perish ; proud, yet not allowing their pride to prick them into unwary or unworthy quarrel ; avaricious yet contentedly rendering to their neighbour his due. . . . You will find among them, as I said, no subtle wit nor high enthusiasm, only an undeceivable common sense, and an obstinate rectitude. They cannot be persuaded into their duties but they feel them ; they use no phrases of friendship but they do not fail you at your need."

Whistler was once asked, " What do you mix your colours with ? " He replied, " With brains." The greatest of word-painters have always mixed brains with their colour, but admittedly there are some passages in Ruskin in which there is more colour than thought. That accuracy of observation which informs his Alpine drawings and many of his descriptive passages is sometimes sacrificed to mere rhetoric as, for instance, in the fictitious contrast which he draws between the Alps seen from above Turin and the Alps as seen from " the Switzer's side."

" Then, higher and higher around the approaching darkness of the plain, rise the central chains, not as on the Switzer's side, a recognisable group and following of successive and separate hills, but a wilderness of jagged peaks cast in passionate and fierce profusion along the circumference of heaven." But the sacrifice of accuracy to rhetoric is rare in his writings. More often he combines the two. The proportion of exact thought is, for instance, exceptionally high in the greatest chapter that he ever wrote, *The Nature of Gothic*, higher perhaps than in anything which he wrote about mountains.

Ruskin was a brilliant apologist for his beliefs, for he was a master of the art of blending reasoned argument and poetic imagery. The apologetics of the mountain-cult contain nothing better than the chapter on " The Mountain Glory " in the Fourth Volume of *Modern Painters*, and it is interesting to note how he varies passages of superb prose with factual points which could be established in a

court of law. Thus after contrasting the glory of mountain trees with "the unvexed and unvaried felicities of the lowland forest," he points out that clearer visibility is a characteristic of mountain trees, "tree after tree being constantly shown in successive height, one behind another, instead of the mere tops and flanks of masses, as in the plains ; and the forms of multitudes of them continually defined against the clear sky, near and above, or against white clouds entangled among their branches, instead of being confused in dimness of distance."

And again the argument of the following comparison between mountain and lowland water is no less effective because it is expressed in language of unusual beauty : "The sea seems only to pause ; the mountain lake to sleep, and to dream. Out of sight of the ocean a lowlander cannot be considered ever to have seen water at all. The mantling of the pools in the rock shadows, with the golden flakes of light sinking down through them like falling leaves, the ringing of the thin currents among the shallows, the flash and the cloud of the cascade, the earthquake and foam-fire of the cataract, the long lines of alternate mirror and mist that lull the imagery of the hills reversed in the blue of morning—all these things belong to those hills as their undivided inheritance."

Ruskin may have been excelled by some few writers in the description of scenery, but no writer can challenge his pre-eminence as the interpreter of the power and majesty of the mountains. Ruskin was the first to formulate a rational apologetic for the mountain-cult, the first prophet to proclaim with unhesitating conviction the relationship of the mountain beauty which is subject to the dominion of decay to that timeless loveliness which awaits us in "the country of everlasting clearness."

CHAPTER VIII

THE BRITISH CONTRIBUTION TO MOUNTAINEERING

MOUNTAINEERING as a sport is a comparatively modern development. Mountain travel as a means of getting from one point to another is as old as man. The ascent of a peak is usually a luxury ; the crossing of a mountain pass may be a practical necessity. From the dawn of recorded time invading armies, pilgrims, merchants, and smugglers have crossed the Alpine passes, but only an occasional eccentric ventured to climb a peak.

The essence of sport is the invention of an artificial problem for the pleasure of solving it. Men do not play football to gratify an obscure appetite for placing a round object between two vertical posts, for this appetite could be satisfied by kicking a goal on an empty field. The attraction of football consists in the solution of an artificial problem created by the intrusion of opponents who are doing all in their power to prevent the ball moving in the direction which you desire. Similarly the essence of mountaineering as a sport is the solution of the problems which the mountain provides. The true mountaineer, however much he may value the by-products of the sport such as the summit panorama, is primarily interested in the mountain as a problem to be solved. A peak does not cease to be a problem merely because it has been climbed. Every unclimbed ridge or face of a peak no longer virgin is a challenge to the mountaineer. Guideless climbing, winter mountaineering, and ski-mountaineering all create new problems. Difficulties, artificial difficulties if you will, are introduced in order to maintain the reality of the conflict, for the essence of mountaineering is not mountain travel, but the duel between the mountain and the man.

Even the climber who follows a guide up a well-known route has to solve a series of problems, for every rock pitch or ice slope is a challenge to his skill, which is measured by the speed and ease and security with which he surmounts the successive obstacles.

In this book I am more concerned to interpret than to record Alpine achievements, and am more interested in the Alpine Club as the embodiment of a particular ethos than in the climbing records of its members, but before attempting to analyse the spirit of that

most Victorian of institutions, the Alpine Club in the first half century of its existence, I must ask the reader's tolerance for a somewhat curt summary of the story of Alpine climbing. For a fuller treatment I refer the reader to *The Early Mountaineers* by Francis Gribble, which is still the best book on the early history of the sport, and to the forthcoming history of the Alpine Club by R. L. G. Irving and H. E. G. Tyndale. For a popular treatment of the subject the reader can consult Frank Smythe's *British Mountaineers* or an early work of my own, *The Alps*, in the *Home University Library*.

In classical and mediæval times various ascents were made for particular objects other than the solution of a technical problem involved in the ascent. Thus Philip V of Macedon climbed Hæmus to discover whether the Adriatic and the Ægean could both be seen from the summit. Hadrian climbed Ætna to see the sun rise, and Roche Melon (11,605 ft.), the first high Alpine peak to be ascended, was climbed by d'Asti in order to found a chapel on the summit. In the fourteenth century Petrarch climbed the low and easy Mont Ventoux (6,273 ft.) and Peter II of Aragon the higher, but easy, Pic Canigou (9,935 ft.) in the Pyrenees. In 1492, the year in which America was discovered, Charles VIII ordered his chamberlain to climb Mont Aiguille in Dauphiny, a mountain which though scarcely higher than 7,000 ft., is still considered a moderately difficult rock climb. By the middle of the eighteenth century only two Alpine mountains, above 10,000 feet in height, had been ascended, Roche Melon and Mont Thabor, but mountaineering made a rapid advance in the second half of the century, and in this advance the Swiss, the Genevese, and the Savoyards played a distinguished part. The Titlis (10,627 ft.), was climbed by four peasants from Engelberg in 1744, perhaps the first purely sporting ascent of a moderately high peak. Twenty-six years later the brothers de Luc climbed the Buet (10,164 ft.) for the purposes of scientific research.

The Church contributed many of the early pioneers. The first ascent of one of the greater peaks of the Alps, Mont Vélan (12,235 ft.), was achieved in 1779 by Murith, one of the canons of St. Bernard Hospice, the Dent du Midi (10,696 ft.) was climbed in 1788 by Clément, curé of the Val d'Illeiez. In 1799 the Gross Glockner (12,461 ft.) was climbed by Von Salm, Bishop of Gurk. But by far the most

distinguished of these ecclesiastical mountaineers was the Benedictine monk, Father Placidus a Spescha, whose career as a mountaineer was described by Coolidge as equal to that of De Saussure himself. Towards the end of the century he carried out a series of brilliant ascents in Eastern Switzerland. In his interesting introduction to the *Lonsdale Library* volume on mountaineering, Professor T. Graham Brown, F.R.S., describes him as "perhaps the first of the true mountaineers." His ascents included the Stockgron (11,411 ft.), the Rheinwaldhorn (11,148 ft.), the Piz Urlaun (11,063 ft.). He was over seventy when he made, in 1824, two attempts on the monarch of the Glarus Alps, the Tödi (11,887 ft.). He reached a gap less than a thousand feet below the summit, from which he watched his two companions attain the highest point.

Unlike De Saussure, whose primary interest in mountaineering was scientific, Father Placidus climbed mountains solely for the joy of climbing. Unlike most eighteenth and early nineteenth century mountaineers, he did not belong to the "one man, one mountain" school. He began to climb in his late twenties, and was still climbing in his seventies. He is, if not the father of mountaineering, at least the father of purely sporting mountaineering.

In 1786 Mont Blanc, monarch of the Alps, was climbed by Paccard and Balmat, both of Chamonix. A year later Colonel Beaufoy reached the summit, being the first Englishman to conquer a high peak. In Austria, the Gross Glockner was climbed in 1799, the Ortler (12,802 ft.), the highest peak in Tirol, by a chamois hunter in 1804, and the Gross Venediger (12,008 ft.) by a party of Austrians in 1841. In 1850 the Piz Bernina (13,295 ft.), the monarch of the Engadine, was climbed by Johann Coaz of Switzerland. Several peaks, but not the highest summit, of Monte Rosa were ascended by Italians in the first half of the century. During the same period, a series of remarkable ascents in the Swiss Alps were made. The Jungfrau (13,670 ft.) was first ascended in 1811 by the brothers Meyer of Aarau, and the Finsteraarhorn (14,026 ft.) by Hugi's guides in 1829. Desor, a colleague in glacier research of the great Swiss scientist Agassiz, was a persistent and successful climber. His guides made the first ascent of the Hasle Jungfrau (*The Wetterhorn* in popular estimation) in 1844, and Desor himself followed one year later. Desor also made the first ascent of the Galenstock (11,805 ft.), of the Rosenhorn peak of the Wetterhörner (12,110 ft.), and of the Lauteraarhorn (13,264 ft.). In 1848 the Pelvoux





(12,973 ft.), one of the more important of the Dauphiné peaks, was climbed by M. Victor Puiseux, a Frenchman.

This bleak catalogue of facts proves that the British did not invent mountaineering. J. D. Forbes, a distinguished Scottish scientist, was the father of British mountaineering. He began to wander about the mountains in 1832, made the fourth ascent of the Jungfrau in 1841, and the first known passage of the Col d'Hérens in 1842, in the course of which he made the first ascent of the Stockhorn (11,796 ft.), and was thus the first British mountaineer to make the *first* ascent of a high Alpine peak. He was also the first British mountaineer to describe in book form a series of Alpine climbs. His *Travels through the Alps of Savoy* (1843) did much to turn the attention of young Englishmen to mountaineering. An even greater influence was exercised by a very different type of mountaineer, Albert Smith. Smith, who was at one time a practising physician, had an unrivalled flair for showmanship and publicity. I do not agree with Professor Brown that he ascended Mont Blanc "with the object of making a commercial show of it." His motives, like those of other mountaineers, were mixed, and the juster verdict is that of Mr. C. E. Mathews: "He was emphatically a showman from his birth, but it is not true that he ascended the mountain for the purpose of making a show of it. His well-known entertainment resulted from a lifelong interest which he had taken in the great summit of which he never failed to speak or write with reverence and affection." Albert Smith's book *Mont Blanc* helps us to understand the popular appeal of his lectures, for it is an engaging blend of genuine enthusiasm, bombast and melodrama. He describes the Mur de la Côte, a steep snow slope which a competent skier could descend in linked turns, as "an all but perpendicular iceberg. . . . Should the foot slip, or the baton give way, there is no chance for life—you would glide like lightning from one frozen crag to another." In actual fact a climber who slipped might, if the slope was exceptionally icy, slide to the bottom of the slope with no worse consequence than a tedious re-ascent to the point from which he fell.

Meanwhile John Ball, Blackwell, Charles Hudson and Speer had initiated the British campaign of Alpine conquest. The so-called "Golden Age of Mountaineering" begins in 1854, with Blackwell and Wills' ascents of the Wetterhorn, already conquered by the Swiss, and ends with the conquest of the Matterhorn by Charles

Hudson and Edward Whymper in 1865. The Alpine Club, Mother of all Alpine clubs, was founded on December 22nd, 1857. Few great peaks were still virgin when the Matterhorn fell, and the majority of those climbed during "the Golden Age" were conquered by British amateurs accompanied by Swiss or, in some cases, French or Italian guides.

The Silver Age of mountaineering opens after the ascent of the Matterhorn and closes with the conquest in 1882 of the Dent du Géant (13,166 ft.) by W. W. Graham and the brothers Sella of Italy. This was the last great peak to be famous and christened *before* being conquered. A few secondary summits, which were named before systematic climbing began, remained unconquered, the highest and easiest, Mont Blanc de Courmayeur, being unaccountably overlooked until comparatively recently. But the conquest of the Géant marks the end of an age, the age of virgin peaks, and thenceforward pioneers in search of novelty had to explore virgin ridges and virgin faces, or to climb peaks which were first identified by mountaineers or minor pinnacles which are indebted for their names to their conquerors. British names dominate not only the Golden but also the Silver Age of mountaineering. Throughout the international mountaineering world Mummery symbolises the Silver Age as surely as Whymper and Leslie Stephen the Golden Age. Indeed there is a tendency for which there is no justification but which is quite as marked among foreign climbers as in England, to give Mummery alone the credit for that rapid advance in rock-climbing technique which rendered possible the conquest of the Chamonix aiguilles, the Grépon and Charmoz by Mummery, the Dru by Dent, and the Requin by a guideless party consisting of Mummery, J. N. Collie, G. Hastings and W. C. Slingsby.

W. Lehner, the author of a provocative history of mountaineering, *Die Eroberung der Alpen*, traces in his book the fortunes of the "*Blauen Band der Alpen*," the blue ribbon of the Alps, which he regards as the symbol of an international championship. He maintains that British mountaineering declined after the death of Hudson, and that in the eighties the best German guideless climbers proved their superiority not only to the English amateurs but also, in some cases, to the best professional guides. He concedes that Geoffrey Young and H. O. Jones won back the Blue Ribbon, but claims that it was later recaptured by the Austrian brothers Mayer.

Lehner could hardly have disputed the pre-eminence of G. W.

Young in the last decade before the world war. His climbs with H. O. Jones (Brouillard ridge of Mont Blanc, north face of Grépon, the two ridges of the Grandes Jorasses, etc.), and his ascent of the south face of the Täschhorn with Ryan, led by Franz Lochmatter, were the outstanding Alpine achievements of the period. On all these great climbs Young was accompanied by the guide, Joseph Knubel of Switzerland.

Peaks, as we have seen, may be divided into those which were well known and christened long before they were climbed, and those which are indebted for their names to their conquerors. An analogous distinction may be drawn between *self-evident* and *invented* routes. The North Face and the Mittellegi Ridge of the Eiger are classic instances of *self-evident* climbs. The Mittellegi skyline and the North Face are outstanding features in the view from Grindelwald, and also in the famous panorama of the Oberland from the terrace at Bern. No man with the instincts of a mountaineer could fail to be interested in the solution of these problems, and from the first they challenged the attention of the mountaineering world.

An extreme example of an *invented* climb is the so-called "girdle traverse," which has become popular on our British mountains. A "girdle traverse" is a traverse *across* the face of a rock cliff, and is seldom attempted before every conceivable variation of buttress and gully has been climbed. The prestige of a climb depends not only on its difficulty but also on its fame. Every tourist who crosses the Scheidegg knows the terrible *Eigerwand* of the Eiger up which the Germans forced their perilous variation of the North Face in 1938. Had this cliff been as hidden from public view as the South Face, which only climbers see, it would never have been attempted.

In the period between the wars the last remaining classic Alpine problems were solved. The seven outstanding climbs of this period were the conquest of the North Face of the Matterhorn by Germans, of the North Face of the Grandes Jorasses by two parties, the first Italian and the second Swiss, on the same day; the conquest of the North Face of the Eiger by Swiss, and of the *Eigerwand* variation by Germans, the South Face of the Matterhorn by Italians, the North Face of the Dent Blanche by an Anglo-Swiss party, I. A. Richards

and Dorothy Pilley, with Swiss guides, and the Mittellegi ridge of the Eiger by a Japanese amateur with Grindelwald guides.

The outstanding wholly British climbs were those of Frank Smythe and Graham Brown on Mont Blanc, guideless ascents of two magnificent routes—scarcely self-evident, since they were virtually discovered by their conquerors—but no less brilliant as mountaineering achievements because they only began to attract attention *after* they had been climbed. Mrs. Hutton-Rudolf, an Englishwoman by birth though Swiss by marriage, accomplished under the leadership of a great Swiss guide, Adolf Rubi, one of the most desperate climbs of the period, the North Face of the Mönch, described by the *Alpine Journal* as “among the most difficult and dangerous expeditions in the Alps.” George Finch led a guideless party up the North Face of the Dent d’Hérens, N. S. Finzi with Swiss guides climbed the North-West Face of the Scheidegg Wetterhorn, and a number of other members of the Club, such as G. R. Lloyd, carried out meritorious if unsensational pioneer ascents.

In the next edition of his book, Herr Lehner will doubtless claim for the Germans the possession of the Blue Ribbon during the inter-war period, and certainly the most desperate venture of these years, the German variation of the North Face of the Eiger, has never been surpassed, but there are some who still hold that the risks which a mountaineer is entitled to accept should not exceed those which are associated with the most perilous aspects of modern war, and if this limitation be accepted, the Blue Ribbon would have to be conceded to the leading Swiss mountaineers of this period. A speciality of these years was the succession of North Faces that were conquered, and Swiss names occur far more often than German in the conquest of the North Faces of the Oberland peaks, Eiger, Mönch, Jungfrau, Lauterbrunnen Breithorn, Grosshorn, Breitlauhorn, Lötschenthaler Breithorn, etc.

The Swiss, French, Italians, Austrians, and Germans can each claim part of the Alps as their native playground, and it is less surprising that the supreme Alpine exploits of this period should have been achieved by Swiss, French, Italian, Austrian and German mountaineers than that the British should have played the dominant role in the early development of Alpine climbing. On our own native mountains cragsmen such as Colin Kirkus and Menlove

Edwards have mastered difficulties at least as formidable as those overcome by the greatest of European climbers or, for that matter, by Americans such as Bester Robinson, Kehrlein or Bedyan in the conquest of the Cathedral Spires, Yosemite or Ship Rock, Nevada.

In recent years British mountaineers who could afford the time and the money have been more attracted by the greater possibilities of the Himalaya and Caucasus than by the few remaining problems of the Alps. In this book I am concerned with the British achievements in Switzerland, but even so it would be absurd completely to ignore the fact that the British have a record second to none in the exploration of the Himalaya, Caucasus, New Zealand Alps, Spitzbergen and the Andes. Even in the North American Continent where the greatest of recent climbs have been, in the main, the work of American and Canadian climbers, the British achievement can stand comparison with that of trans-Atlantic mountaineers.

Before I summarise my estimate of the British contribution to mountaineering, I must defend myself against those who believe that national achievements in mountaineering should never be referred to as such. In the chapter which follows I shall discuss the convention that international rivalry in mountaineering is to be condemned, but even the strictest purist admits that the great drama of the Matterhorn owes much of its appeal to the rivalry between the Anglo-Swiss and the Italian parties who attacked the great peak on the same day from different valleys, and surely we should think the worse not the better of Whymper had he been wholly uninfluenced by considerations of national prestige, and solely interested in the achievement of a personal ambition. Surely it is right and proper that a British mountaineer should be proud of the notable contribution which our countrymen have made to the sport, a pride which is quite consistent with the condemnation of blatant nationalism.

Our subconscious nationalism seldom becomes articulate until provoked by depreciation of our achievements, achievements of which we are none the less conscious because we seldom stress their national character and prefer to discuss them in the context, not of nations but of individuals. It is, however, only necessary for a German to assert that German mountaineering exploits "stand without question on an overwhelming pinnacle" to provoke a spirited

catalogue of British (and incidentally also of Swiss) achievements as, for instance, in Colonel E. L. Strutt's article in *The Alpine Journal* of 1934.

The subconscious nationalism of the pioneers never became articulate because it was unchallenged. Few foreign amateurs were climbing, and fewer still were competing for the great prizes. The pioneers described their climbs in articles intended for a small circle, articles written in a mood of serene self-contentment and unconscious disregard of the climbing world outside their own circle. And this attitude persisted in a modified form until the outbreak of the first world war. In the Eastern Alps the Germans and Austrians were perfecting their own specialised rock techniques, but they were not serious competitors in the Western Alps until the period between the world wars. Those who did put in an appearance in the Western Alps, Blodig, or Winkler, or Preuss, were no more nationalistic than the British.

The Lehnner blue-ribbon complex, the attempt that is to transform the legitimate pride which a mountaineer takes in the mountaineering achievements of his countrymen into a conscious competition for an international championship, is merely one aspect of the aggressive German nationalism, which was a by-product of the defeat and humiliation of 1918. It must, however, be conceded that our attacks on this blue-ribbon complex would carry more conviction if the British did not enjoy a monopoly of access to the most coveted of all mountaineering prizes, Everest. Admittedly the Tibetan Government have, so far, declined to permit any expedition but a British to approach the mountain, but my American mountaineering friends are with difficulty persuaded that the British Government could not extract permission for an American expedition. After the war we should lend-lease Everest to the U.S.A., or organise a joint British-American expedition, for which there is the admirable precedent of the successful attack on Nanda Devi.

"La vérité," as Renan somewhere says, "consiste dans les nuances," a remark which may be illustrated not only by the very real contrast between the subconscious nationalism of British mountaineers and the blatant nationalism of the Nazis, but also between a distinction, upon which Alpine historians rightly insist, the distinction between mountaineering as a sport and mountaineering as a means to an end. It is, as usual, the borderline cases which are difficult to classify. It is easy to assign to their respective

categories the mountaineer who climbs for fun, and the man who merely crosses an Alpine pass to get to the other side, but in many cases motives are mixed. De Saussure, for instance, and Tyndall were primarily interested in the possibilities which mountain travel afforded for scientific research, but they were also interested in mountaineering for its own sake. Tyndall's attempt on the Matterhorn and his conquest of the Weisshorn were certainly not inspired by scientific motives.

The distinction between those who climb for fun and those who climb for some secondary object, such as science, is less important than the distinction between those who climbed some particular mountain, as a stunt, the Mont Aiguille for instance on a "Royal Command" expedition, and those who made a regular practice of climbing, and for this reason I think we must give the Swiss the credit of having inaugurated mountaineering, as that term is understood to-day, for De Saussure and Father Placidus a Spescha were the pioneers of systematic mountaineering. It is only just to reckon as Swiss those who like De Saussure or Ulysses von Salis were citizens of cantons which joined the Swiss Confederation during the first phase of systematic mountaineering. Von Salis, a member of the famous Grisons family, founded as early as 1806 the first of all Alpine periodicals, *Alpina*, which included among its articles "The Ascent of the Ortler Spitze," "Chamois Hunting in Switzerland" and various vague stories of attempts to climb the Eiger and Silberhorn. *Alpina* only survived four years, though the name has been revived in recent times for one of the publications of the Swiss Alpine Club.

It is not in the least surprising that the citizens of Alpine countries should have been the first to conquer many of the great Alpine peaks. Mont Blanc, Mont Vélán, the Dent du Midi, many peaks of Monte Rosa, the Finsteraarhorn, Jungfrau, Wetterhorn and Lauteraarhorn; the Titlis and Tödi, Rheinwaldhorn and Piz Bernina; the Gross Glockner and Ortler; the Pelvoux, and many other peaks had all been climbed by the Swiss, Italians, Austrians and French before the foundation of the Alpine Club.

It is therefore impossible to maintain that we were the first pioneers of mountaineering as a sport, but though we were not the first in the field, we were the first to transform mountaineering from the pursuit of a few individuals, none of whom founded a school, into a world-wide sport. The Alpine Club is the mother of all

mountaineering clubs, and *The Alpine Journal* is the oldest mountaineering publication with a continuous record. During the Golden Age and the Silver Age of Mountaineering the overwhelming majority of first ascents were achieved by British mountaineers.

It is, however, only fair to give full credit to the guides, usually Swiss, but in some cases French, or Italian, who shared these triumphs with the British pioneers. The late J. H. Doughty has suggested in a passage, quoted in full in the notes on the *next* chapter, that the "titular honour of a new climb" should be credited to the man who leads it, irrespective of whether that man be an amateur or a guide, but we must remember that on many of these early expeditions the local guide played a part not necessarily more important than a Himalayan porter, and in some of the most outstanding British achievements of recent years it would be difficult to decide whether the British amateur or the Swiss guide was entitled to a greater share of the credit. The great guides of the Golden and Silver Age never seem to have climbed on their own, and it is not unreasonable that expeditions which were initiated by and financed by British amateurs should be considered as in the main, British expeditions. On the other hand our legitimate pride in the British achievement in mountaineering, on the balance a greater achievement than that of any other country, is slightly tempered by the fact that it would be difficult to name a dozen historic first ascents in the Alps, either of great peaks or of famous ridges and faces, which have been carried through by an *all-British* party. Our guideless amateurs have, for the most part, been content to repeat climbs, and the pioneering has been, almost entirely, the work of British amateurs led by guides.

A brilliant Swiss mountaineer, Jürg Weiss, who was killed on July 20, 1941, in his thirty-second year, among the mountains which he loved, discusses this point in his book *Klippen und Klüfte*, and explains the contrast between the readiness of the British to employ and the determination of the continental climbers to dispense with guides as a by-product of our colonial tradition, a tradition which secures the co-operation and makes full use of native talent for enterprises initiated by the British. "It seems to me," writes Weiss, "basically wrong to speak in this connection," as does Lehner, of "achievements accepted as the gift of foreigners. . . . The contrast between the two attitudes (British and German) is the expression of a contrast between the historical background of

the two nations, and of the social milieus from which the British and German climbers were recruited." Weiss leaves undiscussed the question as to whether British mountaineering benefited or suffered from transporting our colonial tradition to the Alps.

In a subsequent chapter I shall discuss our British contribution to mountain literature, but our pioneer work in Alpine guide-books deserves to be mentioned in a chapter which deals with the exploration of the Alps. John Ball edited the first series of guide-books specifically intended for mountaineers, and Sir Martin Conway's Zermatt Pocket Book (1881) is the ancestor of the technical guide-books for climbers which have appeared since 1881. Finally the first ski guide to any part of the Swiss Alps was the Alpine Ski Club Guide to the Bernese Oberland, the author of which was a British skier.

CHAPTER IX

PORTRAIT OF A CLUB

I

THE Alpine Club, alone among the great Victorian institutions, has so far escaped the delicate attentions of the debunker. No disciple of Lytton Strachey, that great artist who painted in venom, has so far devoted his talents to the denigration of the eminent Victorians who dominated the Alpine scene during the Golden Age. Even if I had the taste and the talent to supply an Alpine sequel to Strachey's *Eminent Victorians*, I should have entered the field too late to hope for success. The reaction has already begun. That great historian of the Second Empire, Mr. F. A. Simpson, has drawn attention to the change of mental climate in one of those rare contributions to contemporary journalism which are wholly decisive in their effect. In *The Cambridge Review* of December 4th, 1943, his devastating criticism of Strachey as a historian ("his fundamental fault was, in fact, a moral one: in the last resort he did not care enough for truth") ended as follows: "For though it was possible to believe, it was hardly possible to go on believing, that a collection of such faintly ridiculous personages actually did occupy in Victorian England the position held there by those who bore the honoured names attached to the puppets of Strachey's amusing peep-show. Such continuance in credulity was perhaps only possible in days that are now not destined to return: days when it was still the fashion for our *jeunesse dorée* and their middle-aged imitators to snigger at that great age of great men—the Age of Queen Victoria."

I see no reason to dissent from the considered view of two friends of mine, recent ex-Presidents of the Alpine Club, that the Alpine Club during this "great age of great men" was richer in outstanding personalities than it is to-day, but even so it should be possible to strike a happy mean between the snigger of the debunker and that uncritical *pietas* which has been the dominant tradition of English mountaineering literature. "No flowers by request" was the motto which Leslie Stephen adopted for his *Dictionary of National Biography*, and may serve also for the Alpine historian.

II

Mountaineering, during the Golden Age, was an exception to the rule that only a born athlete can hope to excel in sport. Many a man who had neither the speed of a track racer, nor the balance and strength of a good oarsman, nor the eye of a cricketer, followed good guides to the summit of unconquered peaks. There was nothing on the mountains which were climbed during this period which could stop a man who was physically fit and who was well led. All that was necessary was enthusiasm, courage and indifference to hardship and discomfort. The men who climbed in the late forties and early fifties were men of courage and vision, for the Alps were still protected by their legendary perils and by the tradition of inaccessibility, but vision and courage are, fortunately, not the monopoly of the naturally athletic.

Admittedly, though the objective difficulties of the mountains climbed during the Golden Age have not changed, excepting in so far as loose rock has been removed, the subjective difficulties have greatly diminished. "On the first ascent a mountain," as Leslie Stephen remarked, "in obedience to some mysterious law, is always more difficult than at any succeeding ascent," but the subjective difficulties which the pioneers encountered should not be exaggerated. Richard Barrington, for instance, who made the first ascent of the Eiger on August 11th, 1858, was not in the least overawed by the unconquered Alps. He had previously ridden the winner of the "Irish Grand National," a more exacting test of courage and skill than his first ascent of the Eiger. His first peak was the Jungfrau. "I met some Alpine men whose footsteps I had tracked down the glacier. Talking about climbing, I said to them I did not think much of the work I had done, and was answered, 'Try the Eiger or the Matterhorn.' 'All right,' I said. . . . Started at 3.30 a.m. on Aug. 11 for the Eiger. We took a flag from the hotel. When we came to the point where one descends into a small hollow I looked well with my glass over the face of the Eiger next us, and made up my mind to try the rocks in front. . . . Almer and Bohren said it was no use, and declined to come the way I wished. 'All right,' I said, 'you may stay; I will try.' So off I went for about 300 or 400 yards over some smooth rocks to the part which was almost perpendicular. I then shouted and waved the flag for them to come on, and after five

minutes they followed and came up to me. They said it was impossible. I said, 'I will try.' So, with the rope coiled over my shoulders, I scrambled up, sticking like a cat to the rocks, which cut my fingers, and at last got up say fifty to sixty feet. I then lowered the rope, and the guides followed with its assistance."

This is clearly a case, and not the only case, in which the credit for a successful first ascent must be given not to the guides but to the amateur. Christian Almer, who followed Barrington with such docility, developed later into one of the greatest of Alpine guides. "With the exception of Melchior Anderegg," wrote Whymper, "there is not, perhaps, another guide of such wide experience, or one who has been so invariably successful; and his numerous employers concur in saying that there is not a truer heart or a surer foot to be found amongst the Alps," but in the fifties the disparity between the guide and the more enterprising type of amateur was less marked than later, and in the fifties even good guides, like Almer, still had a lot to learn, and often aggravated the difficulties of a climb by aberrations which are difficult to explain. Consider, for instance, the Wetterhorn. There are three gullies on the Grindelwald side, a snow gully which ends near the Mittelhorn, the easy, central gully, which is the usual route, and the more interesting northern gully to the existence of which I seem to have been the first to call attention in print, and which I climbed in the course of a solitary ascent of the Wetterhorn. This gully is separated from the central gully by a rock ridge, locally known as the Willsgrätli, by which A. W. Moore climbed the Wetterhorn under the leadership of Christian Almer. "I still think," wrote Moore, "that some parts of the climb were as awkward as anything I have done." Now the central gully is little more than a walk, and there is no hint in Moore's narrative that either he or Christian Almer were aware that they had chosen a needlessly difficult route.

In the Golden Age the amateur was often the real leader of the party, and the guide a local chamois hunter with a rudimentary knowledge of mountain craft. Many of the guides were incompetent and easily demoralised by an accident. "It has been asked," wrote Charles Hudson in his account of an accident on the Col de Miage, "how the different guides conducted themselves. . . . The German guides gave vent to frequent bursts of tears, not only at the moment when we discovered our friend's terrible fall, but from time to time during the day. The two

guides from the neighbourhood of St. Gervais gave no outward manifestation of feeling, though their state was sufficiently indicated by their reply to me when I made some suggestion before leaving the Col, '*Nous sommes des incapables*'."

The Rev. Charles Hudson, who perished on the Matterhorn, was the greatest amateur of his day, a pioneer of guideless climbing, and the natural leader of any expedition in which he took part, guided or guideless. It is significant that whereas every guide who took part in the early attempts on the Matterhorn was misled by the apparent steepness of the Swiss face, and preferred to attack the mountain by the far more difficult Italian ridge, the first attempt on the Matterhorn from Switzerland should have been made by three guideless amateurs, the brothers Sandbach Parker, and that the conquest of the Matterhorn by this face should have been due to the mountaineering insight of Charles Hudson. Instead of wasting time on the Italian ridge, he went straight for the Swiss face, climbed it, and was killed on the descent.

III

The first volume of Mumm's invaluable *Alpine Club Register* contains the records of the 281 members who joined the Club between 1857 and 1863. It is sometimes difficult to decide whether a particular member was merely called to the Bar or actually practised, and I have classified as barristers only those who are known to have practised. In the case of clerical Dons or schoolmasters I have classified as clergy those whose career, before or after their connection with the Universities or Public Schools, indicates that their principal interest was the Church. Allowing for the necessary margin of error, it would seem that of the first 281 members, 57 were practising barristers, 23 were solicitors (thus giving the legal profession a great preponderance), 34 were clergymen, 15 were dons and 7 were schoolmasters, but this number would have been increased if I had classified as schoolmasters some of those who passed from a headmastership to the Mastership of a College or ecclesiastical preferment. There were 5 scientists, 4 professional authors, 4 artists, 2 architects, 2 librarians and 1 lecturer. The Civil Service was represented by 12, the Army by 7 and the Royal Navy by 2 members, medicine by 4 and surgery by 4 members. There were 2 publishers, 5 engineers, 6 printers, stationers and

engravers, 8 bankers, 4 insurance agents, 2 railway directors, 2 estate agents, 5 stockbrokers, 18 merchants. The Club included 3 professional politicians, 13 rentiers, 19 landed gentry, 4 foreign members, and 7 whose professions cannot be ascertained.

Of the first 281 members not more than three belonged by birth to the old aristocracy.

In reading through the Alpine Club Register I have been impressed by the very high proportion of members who distinguished themselves in the service of the Church and State. Members of the Alpine Club have often drawn attention to the fact that no sport has attracted more men of outstanding intellectual attainments than mountaineering. The cynic might reply that Alpine climbing in the fifties and sixties of the last century was the only sport in which an unathletic intellectual could hope to win distinction, but the exodus of Victorian intellectuals to the Alps is not so easily explained. It was essentially a spiritual pilgrimage, an exodus from the Industrial Egypt. The naïve optimism of a Macaulay, measuring progress by the increase of factory chimneys, no longer satisfied the more thoughtful minds of the mid-Victorian age. Men were beginning to realise the urgent necessity of discovering some antidote to the spiritual impoverishment which is the inevitable consequence of an industrial civilisation. Culture is the by-product of agriculture and hardens into civilisation with the growing influence of the great world-cities. "The perfect state," writes Neville Lytton, "ought to contain a certain proportion of unlettered peasants. Unlettered persons are only behind the educated ones in the matter of mechanical knowledge—emotionally and artistically they are far superior." An exaggeration, perhaps, but culture is quite consistent with illiteracy. A friend of mine once engaged an old farmer of Navarre in conversation. She was astonished by his intimate knowledge of the intricate history of Navarre during the Middle Ages, and asked him whether he had read a recent work on the subject by a very learned man. He shook his head. "I cannot read. Everyone has their vocation. My brother's vocation was the Law, so he had to learn to read and write. My vocation is to think."

We cannot all be farmers, and we cannot all live on the land, but most of us can escape for a few weeks every year to the mountains or the sea, and submit to that discipline which Nature imposes on those who seek for truths not revealed to the scholar whose researches

are confined to books. The rapid development of mountaineering in the second half of the nineteenth century can only be explained as the response of man to a new need. Men lifted up their eyes to the hills to rediscover the spiritual values which were clouded by the smoke and grime of the industrial revolution.

It is significant that the Club made most of its recruits from city dwellers, barristers, solicitors, bankers and industrialists. Among the first 281 members to join the Club only three members belonged by birth to the landed aristocracy, and it would seem that not more than nine could be classified as country gentlemen. The country Squire, in close touch with nature, did not feel the same need for an antidote to the spiritual maladies of an industrial civilisation.

IV

The Victorian age opened with a religious revival. "Lord Hatherton used to say," writes Mr. G. M. Young, "that in 1810 two gentlemen in Staffordshire had family prayers; in 1850 only two gentlemen had not."

The early literature of the Alpine Club reflects the simple piety of the pre-Darwinian age. "I am not ashamed to own," writes Alfred Wills, "that I experienced, as this sublime and wonderful prospect burst upon my view, a profound and almost irrepressible emotion. . . . We felt as in the more immediate presence of Him who had reared this tremendous pinnacle, and beneath the 'majestical roof' of whose deep blue Heaven we stood, poised, as it seemed, half-way between the earth and sky."

"He had no fear during the descent," writes Charles Hudson in his description of Birkbeck's accident on the Col de Miage, "owing to the extreme rapidity; but when he came to a halt on the snow, and was ignorant as to whether we saw, or could reach him, he experienced deep anguish of mind in the prospect of a lingering death. Happily, however, the true Christian principles in which he had been brought up, led him to cast himself upon the protection of that merciful Being who alone could help him. His prayers were heard, and immediately answered by the removal of his fears." After enumerating "the long chain of providential arrangements, by the combination of which we were enabled to save Birkbeck's life," Hudson continues: "To whom, then, is due the praise for all these mercies? Surely to Him who guides and protects us day

by day. To Him, then, let us give all glory and thanks. . . ." Simple piety such as this has not vanished from the world, but it has vanished from papers read before the Alpine Club.

Charles Hudson was a period piece, a muscular Christian, as defined by Charles Kingsley, a man who feared God and could walk a hundred miles in a hundred hours. Leslie Stephen, on the other hand, was a muscular agnostic. He left the Church in which he had taken Orders, and wrote *The Agnostic's Apology*, but he retained to the end some of the finer characteristics of the best type of Victorian parson. "Sir Leslie Stephen," writes Raymond Mortimer, "substituting long walks for long prayers and Alps for sanctuaries but as severe as Pusey in his attitude to pleasure is in his earnestness equally remote from the eighteenth-century Gibbon and the twentieth-century Lytton Strachey."

Leslie Stephen had been profoundly influenced by Darwin's *Origin of Species*. It is difficult to understand the sensation caused by that famous book. The French scientists, Buffon, whose book was published a century before Darwin's, Lamarck, and Darwin's grandfather, Erasmus Darwin, had anticipated Darwin in elaborating the scientific arguments for evolution. Evolution was first popularised in a book published fifteen years before Darwin's, *The Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation*, and it was of this book that Disraeli was thinking when he parodied the drawing-room talk of the Forties—"We have been fishes and we shall be crows."

Darwinism is an attempt to explain evolution by the Natural Selection of variations with a survival value. Natural Selection, by hypothesis, is a destructive and not a creative agency, and can only destroy what is already in existence. "Darwinism," as Mr. Arthur Harris pointed out, "may explain the survival of the fittest but cannot explain the arrival of the fittest." It is not easy to understand why a destructive agency, such as Natural Selection, should render unnecessary the hypothesis of a Creator, but though Darwin did not reject theism, Darwinism undoubtedly initiated a period of religious decline.

There is a curious parallel between the effect of the publication of the *Origin of Species* in the eighteen-fifties and of Diderot's *Encyclopædia* in the seventeen-fifties. Both books had weakened the hold of the traditional religion and both exercised an indirect influence on the mountain cult, for some of those who had lost their faith in Christianity sought among the mountains for a spiritual

substitute. It is an interesting coincidence that Rousseau, who was, as Leslie Stephen remarked, "the first to set up mountains as objects of human worship," should have completed his *Nouvelle Héloïse* in the same decade as the *Encyclopædia*, and exactly one hundred years before the publication of the *Origin of Species* and the first volume of *Peaks, Passes and Glaciers* which appeared in the same year. The modern devotees of Alpine mysticism have missed a chance to congratulate Providence on her thoughtfulness in providing, both in the seventeen-fifties and in the eighteen-fifties, an appropriate mountain antidote to philosophic scepticism. Let the Alpine Club see to it that when the scientists are celebrating the centenary of the *Origin of Species*, the mountaineers do not forget the centenary of *Peaks, Passes and Glaciers*. It may well be that the latter work will have been more successful than the former in resisting the erosion of time.

Ramond de Carbonnière, the Pyrenean pioneer, was the father of Alpine Mysticism. He was of the generation that had been influenced by Diderot and Voltaire, but though he rejected Christianity, he could not rest content in the arid negations of pure scepticism. Among the mountains, writes Dr. Engel, he had heard "a strange voice, the voice of the spirit of the earth." "L'imagination," writes Ramond, "s'empare de ce que la Raison abandonne et dans cette longue succession de périodes, elle croit entrevoir une image de l'éternité qu'elle accueille avec une terreur religieuse."

Leslie Stephen would have repudiated the label of a mountain mystic, but, like Ramond, he was a mystic *malgré lui*. "If I were to invent a new idolatry," he writes, "(rather a needless task) I should prostrate myself, not before beast, or ocean, or sun, but before one of those gigantic masses to which, in spite of all reason, it is impossible not to attribute some shadowy personality. Their voice is mystic and has found discordant interpreters; but to me at least it speaks in tones at once more tender and more awe-inspiring than that of any mortal teacher. The loftiest and sweetest strains of Milton or Wordsworth may be more articulate, but do not lay so forcible a grasp upon my imagination."

Stephen's "in spite of all reason" is only a variant of Ramond's "L'imagination s'empare de ce que la Raison abandonne." Certainly Leslie Stephen never wasted a moment seeking for a rational explanation of that sense of a "shadowy personality" which he experienced among the mountains. Or did he, perhaps,

suspect that the "shadowy personality" might, perhaps, be the shadow of a Personality?

Since Stephen's day the Alpine mystics have become less hesitant in their claims. Mountains, so Mr. Irving insists with no diffident qualification, no "in spite of all reason," have, as the result of our contact with them, "been acquiring personality. It is our privilege to be the agents of this creative activity. . . . By the simple and delightful process of climbing mountains, getting to know them and loving to be with them . . . we are giving personality to these objects of our devotion, and so making our contribution to the gradual permeating and final replacement of the material and perishable by the non-material and indestructible. . . . In this last year . . . I have looked once more on the familiar slopes behind Pen-y-gwryd, and those by which Saussure made his way up Mont Blanc from Chamonix. They were outwardly the same as when I saw them more than thirty years ago, yet I knew them to be different. I do not mean that the path over to Tryfaen is better cairned and less easy to lose in mist, or that the track leading to the Bosses is more deeply ploughed: it was a change that I noticed because something of myself was there. In so far as we have shared in the process of giving spiritual reality to forms of matter which we have called Mont Blanc or Glydr Fach by the interchange of what we have given them and they have given us, there is a part of our personality in them and of theirs in us that is indestructible."

Admirable though this be as a record of what many mountain lovers feel, Mr. Irving seems curiously content with the mere statement of a problem which he makes no attempt to solve. In this he is not unique. Indeed it was because no mountaineer, so far as I know, has ever attempted to *explain* this strange sense of personal communion which we experience in the mountains that I devoted a chapter to Alpine mysticism in my book *Mountain Jubilee*, a chapter the conclusions of which may be briefly summarised as follows:

Every poet, every artist and every true mountain lover accepts, if only unconsciously, the Platonic distinction between *αὐτὸ τὸ καλόν* (beauty itself) and *τὰ πολλὰ καλὰ* (many beautiful things); that is, between beauty as a universal, and beauty in its particular manifestations. In the temporal loveliness of the hills we see a reflection of a beauty which is timeless and eternal. Rock and ice

have no personality, *pace* Mr. Irving, but we are conscious in their presence of a Personality which reveals itself to man in the visible beauty of the temporal order. All true mountain lovers, whether they climb mountains or merely worship them from below, are, I believe, in some sense neo-Platonists, but the mountaineer parts company with a mountain lover, like Ruskin, for he has chosen the ascetic way to mountain understanding. He has been initiated into the secret of the ascetic, and has found the happiness which is the by-product of pain and danger. But when we have said this we have said all that can usefully be said on the relationship of mountaineering to religion. Mountaineering is not a religion. It is a sport, and in so far as it is something more than a sport we must base this claim on the fact that it is carried out in surroundings which suggest spiritual truths to the unspiritual.

After his visit to the Grande Chartreuse, Gray wrote to West : " Not a precipice, not a torrent, not a cliff, but is pregnant with religion and piety. There are certain scenes that would awe an atheist into belief without the help of other arguments." Ruskin compared mountains to cathedrals and though it is silly to worship either mountains or cathedrals, a sport which has for its setting the great cathedrals of nature tends " to awe an atheist into belief without the help of other arguments." It is this which explains what a reviewer in the *Oxford Magazine* calls not only " the strange mysticism which sets mountaineering apart from other sports," but also the quasi-sacerdotal character of the Alpine Club.

The Alpine Club was inevitably influenced by the mental climate of the Victorian age. Every generalisation about the Victorians requires to be qualified, but I do not think that it is unfair to suggest that the Victorians, in the main, were easily content with surface explanations and curiously uncritical in their attitude to the fashionable doctrines of the day, such as the perfectibility of man, the inevitability of progress, and the curious theory that Mr. Darwin had explained the origin of weeds by pointing out that the gardener, Mr. Natural Selection, had failed to remove them. " Never in the whole history of the world," writes Professor F. M. Powicke, " did so many people believe so firmly in so many things, the authority for which they could not test, as do Londoners to-day."

Whereas the mediæval philosophers attempted to provide a rational demonstration of their beliefs, the new Deity, Science, demanded and received from his devotees an unquestioning

acceptance of the basic dogma of Science, the supreme importance of truth irrespective of its consequences. An astronomer who discovers a new planet is held in high honour in spite of the fact that the health, wealth and happiness of mankind are completely unaffected by his discovery. No mediæval student would have been allowed to *assume* that truth should always be preferred to falsehood and that the disinterested search for truth as an end in itself was a praiseworthy activity. He would have been expected to *prove* both propositions, and had he failed to do so he would have been sent to the bottom of the class and required to write out in a fair flowing hand the twenty-third chapter of the second book of the *Summa Contra Gentes*, which contains a rational defence of the proposition that the first cause of the universe is mind, and that the last end of the universe must be the good of mind, that is truth, and that in the contemplation of truth man finds the principal object of wisdom.

The sub-title of *The Alpine Journal*, "A Record of Mountain Adventure and Scientific Observation by Members of the Alpine Club" represents a timid concession to the *Zeitgeist*. Even the fiercest critics of mountaineering would have been disarmed had all climbers been in a position to answer the question "What is the point of climbing?" by the reply "Scientific research." But a man has as much right to climb because he enjoys solving the problem of virgin peak, as to explore glaciers because he enjoys solving the problem of the great ice ages. In neither case does mankind derive practical benefit from a correct solution.

Fortunately the *Alpine Journal's* sub-title is a vestigial remnant of an unworthy attempt to appease the fashion of the age. The tutelage of Science was decisively repudiated by Leslie Stephen in a paper on the first ascent of the Zinal Rothorn which he read before the Club in 1864. "'And what philosophical observations did you make?' will be the inquiry of one of those fanatics who, by a reasoning process to me utterly inscrutable, have somehow irrevocably associated Alpine travelling with science. To them I answer, that the temperature was approximately (I had no thermometer) 212 (Fahrenheit) below freezing-point. As for ozone, if any existed in the atmosphere, it was a greater fool than I take it for."

Tyndall was incensed by Leslie Stephen's flippancy, and it was years before the breach was healed. Many of the high priests of

Science were as touchy as Torquemada. Mivart, a distinguished scientist, who though a convinced evolutionist was also the first effective critic of Darwinism, withdrew his candidature at the Athenæum because the indignant Darwinists threatened to black-ball him. And it was, as we shall see, his touchiness about science which was responsible for Tyndall's resignation from the Alpine Club in 1862.

Alpine mythology has much in common with Scientific mythology, the myth of the disinterested mountaineer being an exact counterpart to the myth of the disinterested scientist. There are undoubtedly scientists whose single-minded devotion to truth is uninfluenced by the slightest taint of personal interest, scientists who examine with the same impartiality facts which tell against and facts which lend support to those discoveries of their own, on which their prestige and professional status depend. There are secular saints in the priesthood of science just as there are ecclesiastical saints in the priesthood of the Church. But saints are rare. "You have no idea," wrote Huxley to a friend, "of the intrigues that go on in this blessed world of science. Science is, I fear, no purer than any other region of human activity; though it should be. Merit alone is very little good; it must be backed by tact and knowledge of the world," and elsewhere he remarks that "pedantry and jealousy are the besetting sins of scientific men."

The Alpine equivalent to the disinterested scientist is the disinterested mountaineer, who repudiates competition with other mountaineers and is interested only in the competition with the mountain. He climbs for the sheer joy of climbing, and is indifferent to such adventitious prestige as he may acquire by some brilliant ascent. Now disinterested mountaineers are much more common than scientific or ecclesiastical saints not because mountaineers, as such, are more saintly, but because competition necessarily plays a comparatively small part in mountaineering. It is only the minority who *can* compete, only a minority who have the leisure, the skill, opportunity and the means to attempt the conquest of Himalayan giants, and it is only an élite who possess the super-human skill and courage which alone rendered possible the conquest of the last of the great Alpine classics, the north faces of the Matterhorn, Eiger, and Grandes Jorasses. It is, however, the peculiar glory of mountaineering that the thing which the élite shares even with those who only follow good guides up oft-climbed routes is

infinitely more precious—even to the élite—than prizes for which those who make Alpine history compete. And this exceedingly great reward which is within reach of all true mountaineers, is, to quote F. W. Bourdillon, “the ideal joy that only mountains can give—the unreasoned, uncovetous, unworldly love of them we know not why, we care not why, only because they are what they are ; because they move us in some way that nothing else does.”

The Alpine Club has always deprecated competitive mountaineering, not only between individuals but even more so between nations. Once again note the analogy with Science, for Science is alleged to be international, and the true scientist, so we are assured, is uninterested in the nationality of those who contribute to our stock of scientific knowledge. In point of fact the Victorians, whether scientists or mountaineers, were often very insular, but British nationalism has always been not only more civilised and less aggressive but also far more successful than German nationalism. Had Darwin been a German, the Germans would have set to work to prove that his inconvenient predecessors, Buffon and Lamarck, were pure Nordics who had emigrated to France, and that the evolutionary theory from Buffon to Darwin was wholly Germanic. The British, on the other hand, instead of exposing the weakness of their claim by formally stating it, unobtrusively assumed possession of French property by imposing upon the world the word “Darwinism” as the equivalent of evolution. Sir Arthur Keith, for instance, has written a book about Darwinism in the Forum Library, in which the word “Darwinism,” which is never defined, is used throughout as the equivalent of “evolution.”

The injustice to foreign scientists implicit in popular misuse of the word “Darwinism” is no greater than the injustice to foreign mountaineers in the misuse of the adjective “sporting” in the following sentence. “It has been generally agreed to consider Mr. Justice Wills’ ascent of the Wetterhorn in 1854 as the first purely sporting climb.” This remarkable statement occurs in the preface to the reprint of various articles from early volumes of the *Alpine Journal*, republished as *Peaks, Passes and Glaciers ; Third Series*, as late as 1932. Nearly twenty years before this book appeared I had refuted this hoary legend in my little book *The Alps*. The facts are that the Wetterhorn was first climbed by Desor’s Swiss guides in 1844. Desor, of Neuchatel, followed a year later. Three months before Wills’ ascent the peak was twice climbed by

Blackwell, an Englishman, first by the Rosenloui route, and on the second occasion by the Grindelwald route, subsequently followed by Wills. On his second ascent Blackwell was beaten by a storm about ten feet from the top, ten feet which he had previously climbed. Wills' ascent was therefore the fifth (or to be pedantic, the fourth complete) ascent of the Wetterhorn and the second from Grindelwald.

What precisely is meant by "purely sporting"? It is absurd to assume that De Saussure, Forbes, Aggasiz and Desor were only interested in mountaineering as an aid to scientific discovery, but, even if we rule out the scientists, we have still to find some motive, other than nationalism, for the bland disregard of Father Placidus a Spescha's achievements. For Father Placidus has some claim to be considered the first purely sporting mountaineer. He was not in the least interested in science. He climbed mountains for precisely the same reason that Whympers or Geoffrey Young climbed them, because he loved them passionately, and was never happier than when attempting to solve the problem of a virgin ascent. He belonged neither to the one-man-one-mountain school nor to the one-man-one-mountaineering-season school. From 1788 to 1824 he enjoyed at least nine climbing seasons in the course of which he made the first ascent of the Rheinwaldhorn (11,149 ft.), the highest summit round the sources of the Hinter Rhine; the Güferhorn (11,132 ft.), the second highest summit in that region; the Oberalpstock (10,962 ft.), the highest point near Dissentis, the Piz Urlaun, Piz Aul, Piz Scharboden and Piz Terri, and he organised and took part in the expedition which climbed the Tödi, though he did not himself reach the highest point. Mumm, in his *Alpine Register*, gives the qualifications on which members were elected to the Alpine Club. Of those elected in the first twenty years of the Club's history, very few had better qualifications than Father Placidus.

The Wills-Wetterhorn myth is an interesting by-product of our unconscious nationalism. Except in rare cases, such as the duel for the Matterhorn which is discussed in the *notes* to the last chapter, international rivalry played no part in shaping our contribution to Alpine history. The Alpine Club enjoyed that "tranquil consciousness of effortless superiority" which Asquith defined as the essence of the Balliol manner, the quiet assumption of priority in the invention of mountaineering as a sport was a by-product of an

unchallenged pride rather than of any conscious desire to belittle the achievements of foreign mountaineers. It is precisely because Lehner writes as a frank and avowed nationalist that he is more alive to the danger of an effective rejoinder, with the result that however anxious he may be to belittle British and exaggerate German achievements, he never sponsors a claim as fantastic as the well-established legend that Wills' ascent of the Wetterhorn was "the first purely sporting climb."

We profess to be amused by people like Herr Lehner, who are so anxious to prove that this German or that wrested "the Blue Ribbon of the Alps" from the hands of the British, but if we criticise the aggressive nationalism of the Germans we should be scrupulously exact in the claims which we make for our own contribution to the sport, whereas in point of fact some of our writers have tended to acquiesce in the friendly conspiracy to treat the British as the inventors of purely sporting mountaineering. Thus Professor T. Graham Brown, F.R.S., after pointing out that Wills' ascent of the Wetterhorn was "not the first 'sporting' ascent of a high mountain as it is sometimes claimed to have been"—as I have shown, a *preposterous* claim—proceeds to describe Speer's ascent of the highest point of the Wetterhorn in 1845 as "Perhaps the first purely 'sporting' ascent of a mountain, if we except some of the ascents of Mont Blanc." Speer's climb was separated from one of the first, perhaps the first purely sporting ascent of a high peak, the Titlis, by a century, the same period that separates the publication of the *Origin of Species* from Buffon's pioneer study of evolution. The Titlis ascent is mentioned by Professor Brown in the scholarly summary of early mountaineering which he contributed to the volume of mountaineering in the Lonsdale Library, a summary in which he mentions the "sporting" ascents of a succession of non-British eighteenth-century climbers.

There is an amusing example of unconscious nationalism in Leslie Stephen's review of Whymper's *Scrambles in the Alps*. After comparing the wretched illustrations in *Peaks, Passes and Glaciers* with Whymper's excellent engravings, he continues: "It will readily be admitted, especially by members of the Alpine Club, that if the Alpine Club has done nothing else it has taught us for the first time really to see the mountains." Leslie Stephen may have known little or nothing of the Swiss school of mountain artists (such as Linck and the Lorys), but Ruskin's admirable mountain

drawings were certainly familiar to him, and it was certainly not the Alpine Club which taught Ruskin "to see the mountains."

On the other hand the faint flavour of nationalism in our Alpine literature is never aggressive, and our contributions to Alpine history, whether in the *Alpine Journal* or in book form, have seldom been criticised even by the most sensitive of foreigners as unduly partial to Great Britain.

Even in a sport which professes to be non-competitive national rivalry cannot be and, perhaps, should not be, wholly eliminated. It is right and proper that Englishmen should continue to hope that Everest will be conquered by Englishmen. Men who are unmoved by pride of country are defectives, like the colour-blind or the stone-deaf. *Abusus non tollit usum*. The abuse of nationalism does not invalidate its proper use.

It was less the influence of nationalism than the influence of Governments which was disastrous in both mountaineering and ski-ing. The maintenance of a strict amateur standard in sport is comparatively unimportant compared to the maintenance of a strict non-political standard, for it is impossible to prevent a sport degenerating once success in that particular sport is exploited to promote the prestige of a particular ideology or political party. The influence of politics on mountaineering has been particularly mischievous for, if special inducements are offered for outstanding mountaineering achievements, the death rate soon begins to approach that of modern war. Every member of the first three parties which attempted the Eigerwand was killed (six Germans and two Italians), and the fourth party, which succeeded, only escaped death by a miracle.

I remember meeting two penniless young Germans, who had walked from Munich, earning their food by playing the zither and sending round the hat. They were preparing to attack some of the great unconquered ridges and faces of the Alps. At the worst they would be killed. At the best they would make a name for themselves and thus lift themselves out of the ruck of the anonymous unemployed.

A young German who had been rescued, with infinite trouble and at great risk to his rescuers, explained that he had an aged father to support and was trying to attract the attention of the authorities by desperado climbing. The extent to which the traditions of a noble sport were corrupted by National Socialism

emerges from the rebuff administered by a German rescue party to some Swiss climbers who joined them as a matter of course. "Germans," the young Nazis explained, "can only be rescued by Germans." But it is only just to add that the overwhelming majority of German mountaineers would have been disgusted by sentiments such as these.

There was little to choose, so far as official pronouncements were concerned, between the Nazi and the Fascist attitude to mountaineering, but the Italian is by temperament a sceptic and my Italian mountaineering friends felt as I did about the new Alpine ideology and its more characteristic expressions, such as, for instance, the following passage from the *Rivista del Centro Alpinistico Italiano* (1930) :

"A climber has fallen. Let a hundred others arise for the morrow. Let other youths strew edelweiss and alpenrose upon the body of the fallen comrade ; and lay it with trembling devotion face upturned under the soft turf. Then up, once more to the assault of the rocks and of the summit, to commemorate the fallen one in the highest and most difficult of victories !

The medal for valour in sport, the highest distinction accorded by the Duce to exceptional athletes who break world records or are victors in international contests, will be awarded to climbers who vanquish mountains by new ascents of the sixth standard.

All Italians ought to know how to live in mountainous country. All our wars will always take place in the mountains, and the cult of mountaineering passionately pursued, and spreading more and more among our young men, will contribute to the military preparedness of the young generation."

All of which strikes us as odious nonsense.

The hard-bitten Nazi was, of course, unmoved by our censure, and, if he gave the matter a thought, he probably assumed that, with characteristic British hypocrisy, we were merely disguising our envy of German pre-eminence by an affectation of moral disapproval, but this charge is easily refuted by citing a long catena of generous tributes in the *Alpine Journal* to the achievements of foreign climbers. "Confronted by such a performance," wrote Colonel E. L. Strutt of the German conquest of the Matterhorn North Face, "criticism or praise must perforce remain silent." Colonel E. L. Strutt, who edited the *Journal* during the years when the Germans were achieving their greatest successes, was as generous

in his praise for those achievements of foreign mountaineers, which conformed to his standards of sound mountaineering, as he was severe in his strictures on those which did not. He gave signal proof of his own freedom from bias by publishing a strong criticism of himself for a blunder which resulted in a minor accident. Convincing evidence of his objectivity is the contrast between his comments on two successes by non-British mountaineers, the Swiss conquest of the true North Face of the Eiger and the German conquest of the *Eigerwand* face. On August 1st, 1932, Alfred Zürcher and Hans Lauper, with the guides Alexander Graven and Joseph Knubel, climbed the true North Face of the Eiger, a magnificent expedition which was carried out in the day, which involved no artificial aids to climbing, such as pitons, and no objective risks, such as falling stones. Subjective risks were reduced to a minimum by the superb skill, both of the amateurs and the guides. "We must congratulate our members," wrote Colonel Strutt, "on a superb expedition by far the most important of the 1932 season. We might add that it is a source of gratification to us that the North Face of the Eiger, the last important problem of the Bernese Oberland, should have been solved by this unsurpassed all-Swiss party."

The climber who attempts the Eigerwand section of the North Face must be prepared to spend at least two nights and three days on the climb, knowing well that events have demonstrated the extreme risks involved in a retreat to the base if the weather changes for the worse, a change which may aggravate the great risk of stonefall on this face by the further peril of snow avalanches. The climb thus involves a desperate gamble with the weather. "The Eigerwand still unscaled," wrote Colonel Strutt, "continues to be an obsession for the mentally deranged of almost every nation. He who first succeeds may rest assured that he has accomplished the most imbecile variant since mountaineering first began." It would be easy to cite even more severe comments from the great Zürich paper, *Sport*. In the same volume of the *Alpine Journal* the new Editor, Mr. H. E. G. Tyndale "saw no reason to dissent" from Colonel Strutt's opinion but paid a generous tribute to the "skill, endurance and modesty" of the German-Austrian party which finally conquered the Eigerwand. "Whether such climbs should be attempted," I wrote in the *British Ski Year Book*, "is a matter of opinion; whether pitons are legitimate is also a subject of

controversy, but it is ungenerous for those who dislike desperado climbing or pitons to belittle the greatest *tour de force* in the history of mountaineering."

The various attempts and final conquest of the Eigerwand are described in the Notes at the end of this book. Furthermore, while I was passing the final proofs for the press I had the good fortune to meet Captain Marples, one of our own crack rock climbers, who knew many of the leading German mountaineers. He assures me that the German Aces with whom he climbed disliked the regime, and were completely uninfluenced by the Nazi attempt to shape the development of mountaineering. Captain Marples, whose views are summarised in the Notes, had the greatest admiration for the achievements of German mountaineering. I agree with Captain Marples that our verdict on German mountaineering achievements should not be influenced by our detestation of Nazism or by the fact that we are at war with Germany.

v

"Lover" is the literal meaning of "amateur," and an amateur might be defined as a man who loves the game for the sake of the game. The tradition of the Alpine Club has been an amateur tradition in this sense of the word, for we have climbed because we loved climbing and not because we wished to demonstrate the virtues of a particular nation, race, or political system. It would, of course, be foolish to imply that the incidental prestige which is the by-product of great achievements, in mountaineering as in other activities, means nothing to a great mountaineer, but the Alpine Club has not been unsuccessful in its effort to relegate these by-products of the sport to a secondary position. That the competitive spirit is wholly alien to our traditions is, of course, a pious fiction, but pious fictions are sometimes useful, and the value of this particular convention is demonstrated by the results which follow when competition, instead of being restrained, is deliberately encouraged, as in Nazi Germany. The justification for discouraging in mountaineering the competitive element which is the very basis of most sports is the fact that national and personal vanity incite climbers to accept wholly unjustifiable risks. The Alpine Club, as the mother of all Alpine clubs, has always been particularly conscious of her responsibilities for shaping the traditions

of the sport. In her attitude to innovations she has been influenced not only by a strong prejudice against anything which appears to aggravate the dangers of mountaineering but also by a dislike of innovations, such as ice-claws and pitons which reduce the difficulties of climbing. It is easier to protest against than to define unjustifiable risks and nobody to-day would defend, even within the context of the time, the attitude adopted in 1870 by the Club towards guideless climbing.

The occasion which provoked the Club to record their views on guideless climbing was the publication by the Rev. A. G. Girdlestone of his book, *The High Alps Without Guides*. Girdlestone was an enterprising but incompetent mountaineer, and his misadventures on very easy expeditions were certainly no advertisement for guideless climbing. Girdlestone's book was the subject of a paper read before the Alpine Club in 1870 by F. C. Grove. At the conclusion of the paper "it was agreed without a single dissentient that it is highly desirable that it should be known to be the settled opinion of the Alpine Club, that, whilst the danger may be reduced to an insignificant amount by proper care, the neglect to take guides on difficult expeditions, and especially the neglect to take them when the party is not exclusively composed of practised mountaineers, is totally unjustifiable and calculated to produce the most lamentable results."

As Grove had described the Wetterhorn, which Girdlestone climbed, as "very difficult," the resolution condemning the "neglect to take guides on difficult expeditions" was, in effect, a condemnation of guideless climbing except on very easy climbs. John Ball, Alfred Wills, Mathews, Freshfield and Leslie Stephen all voted for this strange resolution, a resolution which is all the more difficult to understand in view of the fact that many members of the Alpine Club had already initiated guideless climbing and achieved far greater success than Girdlestone. Hudson, E. S. Kennedy, C. Ainslie and C. and J. G. Smyth had made guideless ascents of the Klein-Matterhorn and Breithorn and the first guideless ascent of Mont Blanc (also the first ascent from St. Gervais) as early as 1855. Even more remarkable were the guideless ascents of the three brothers A. T., S. S., and C. S. Parker. In 1860 they crossed the Strahlegg and Schwarzberg-Weisstor, and made the first attempt on the Matterhorn from Zermatt. In 1865 they climbed the Wildstrubel, crossed the Triftjoch and made the first

guideless ascent of the Finsteraarhorn. In 1858 Tyndall made a solitary ascent of Monte Rosa.

In 1872, two years after the Alpine Club had done their best to conceal, by a deplorable resolution, the fact that the pioneers of guideless climbing were members of the Club, John Stogdon, a famous Harrow master, and the Rev. Arthur Fairbanks made guideless ascents of the Gross Nesthorn and Aletschhorn, but did not risk provoking the censure of the orthodox by publishing any record of these expeditions. In 1876 Cust, Carwood and Colgrove climbed the Matterhorn without guides. "Cricket," wrote Arthur Cust, "is a sport which is admitted by all to need acquired skill. A man can buy his mountaineering as he can buy his yachting. None the less, there are yachtsmen and yachtsmen."

Human motives are often mixed. Among those responsible for the conservative attitude of the Club the majority were, no doubt, only influenced by a genuine concern for the good name of mountaineering, but there were others who were affected, if only unconsciously, by the realisation that a standard was being set which was higher than that to which they could attain.

"You have little idea," Mr. Stogdon once remarked to me, "of the awe with which climbers were regarded in the seventies. The prestige of even a mediocre mountaineer in those days was scarcely less than that of a golf champion to-day."

Mountaineers, of course, were often attacked in the Press for their incredible foolhardiness, but even the most sensitive of men can accept with Christian resignation the charge of reckless courage. "The profession of soldiers and sailors," said Samuel Johnson, "has the dignity of danger," and sports which have this "dignity of danger" inevitably rank higher in public estimation than those which involve risk neither to life nor to limb. It is therefore easy to understand the attraction of mountaineering for intellectuals who lacked the qualities necessary for success in competitive sports, but who had the enterprise to perceive the possibilities of this new sport, and the stamina and courage necessary for mountaineering. It was, perhaps, both a new and not unwelcome experience for scholars who had been derided as "saps" while at school to be chided by their female friends for their insensate foolhardiness in facing the manifold perils of the Alps. And, human nature being what human nature is, it was inevitable that those who could not have led a guideless party up a second-class peak should not

welcome a development which threatened to divide mountaineers into the guideless élite and a guided proletariat. "Whilst the true mountaineer," writes Mummery, "is undoubtedly '... the noblest work of God,' a thing that is pushed and hustled up peaks by Swiss peasants, and which is so wholly unable to take care of itself that it cannot be trusted to sit on a crag unroped, is as contemptible an object as may easily be imagined. A man should never knowingly and deliberately thrust himself into places where he is hopelessly mastered and dominated by his environment."

Mummery, of course, would have been the first to admit that a man does not cease to be a "true mountaineer" because he employs a guide. A first-class amateur who attempts new routes, or peaks which neither his guide nor he have previously climbed, may well be a partner in a common enterprise, to which his contribution is by no means necessarily less valuable than the professional's. A striking illustration of this was the great Young-Knubel partnership. Young, who had proved, on the south ridge of the Nesthorn, and elsewhere, that he could lead a first-class pioneer route, planned and directed the strategy of his classic climbs. Knubel was a magnificent tactician, Young a superb strategist. Together they constituted a combination unsurpassed in the last decade before the first World War.

VI

Alpine conservatives may be divided into two classes, those who are critical of innovations because they are concerned for the good name of the sport, and those who are hostile to developments that raise the standard because they are concerned for their own reputation. The archetype of the latter class was the Rev. W. A. B. Coolidge. Coolidge was unathletic and short-sighted. Those who relied on his descriptions of routes in those volumes of the *Climbers' Guides* for which he was responsible, subjected themselves, as I know to my cost, to a far more exacting test than guideless climbing. He would certainly have lost himself on the easiest of mountains, but he followed Christian Almer up an incredible number of first-class climbs. He was amazingly tough, and deserves full credit as one of the great pioneers of winter mountaineering, for he made the first winter ascents of the Wetterhorn, Schreckhorn and Jungfrau.

A friend of mine who had been an undergraduate at Magdalen, Oxford, of which Coolidge was for some time a Fellow, described his astonishment when he discovered that Coolidge was a great mountaineer. "I remember him," said my friend, "as a tubby, undersized little man, the sort of Don whom one might expect to 'sport his oak' on Bump supper nights to avoid being assaulted by intoxicated toughs."

It was wholly delightful for the Rev. W. A. B. Coolidge to be promoted by his Alpine exploits from the category of a "tubby, undersized little man" to that of an Alpine hero. His vanity was inordinate. I remember receiving from him something which I assumed to be a Christmas card, but which, on further examination, disclosed itself as a reprint of his biographical notice in *Who's Who*, surrounded by an embroidered border of edelweiss and alpenrosen.

Coolidge disapproved of guideless climbing, because he climbed with guides. He had a high opinion of winter mountaineers because he had made many fine ascents in winter. He had a complete contempt for skiers, because he could not ski; and he refused to admit that there was such a thing as ski-mountaineering. He had never climbed outside the Alps and *therefore* "it was difficult," to quote from Freshfield's obituary notice, "to induce him to take interest in any range outside the Alps; even the assault on Mount Everest failed to stir him." He devoted all his leisure to Alpine history, and had a high opinion of the one Alpine historian with whom he had never quarrelled, himself. He could describe neither a climb nor a view, and his prose was excruciatingly tedious, and he was therefore "intolerant," to quote again from Freshfield, "of any attempts at æsthetic description."

VII

Herr Lehner is interesting on the psychological reasons for the greater popularity of guideless climbing among the Germans in the nineteenth century than among our own people.

"Mountaineering among the English," he writes, "was almost exclusively the monopoly of the well-to-do, which no doubt explains their indifference to the charms of guideless climbing. They were able to secure the assistance of the best guides and to make their *début* with first-class tours which a guideless climber could only undertake after a long apprenticeship. Among the Germans, on the contrary, mountaineering was more democratic. It is essentially

the sport of the middle classes and, above all, of the young university students. Guideless climbing developed all the more rapidly because few Germans could afford to pay for guides. Here, at least, lack of money was no disadvantage to the development of the sport.

"And there is another factor which must be taken into consideration. The Englishmen came to the Alps as fully developed master men [*fertige Herrenmenschen*]. They were financially independent and in a position to develop their personalities by free choice of a career. The German, on the other hand, came from a narrow circle, and was forced to devote himself throughout life to a restricted calling. The German had little opportunity to become a complete man or fully to develop his own personal tastes and characteristics. To the young German then, as now, the mountains appealed primarily as an avenue of escape from restrictions. Among the mountains he sought to develop his own personality, which was impossible in the routine of his middle-class life. Fully conscious of his 'Herrentum,' the Anglo-Saxon could afford to disregard his dependence on guides. The German was attracted by guideless climbing because he found in it the freedom which he missed elsewhere and the awakening of his dormant sense of mastery."

Herr Lehner grossly underestimated the extent to which guideless climbing was practised among the British, and does not appear to have realised that on our own native rock-climbs guides (and incidentally pitons) are unknown, but we must admit that until recently the proportion of guideless climbers was far higher among continental than among British mountaineers. "We cannot ignore the fact," said Captain J. P. Farrar in his Valedictory Presidential address (December, 1919), "that mountaineering as practised with the *full* approval of this Club has remained in leading strings longer than any other hard pursuit followed by active Englishmen. Good feeling towards a particular guide, or the difficulty of finding a companion of like powers, tastes and better temper has had much to do with this result. . . . But this Club is getting old. We must study youth. Caution can be overdone."

The opposition of Alpine conservatives to innovations such as the use of crampons (ice-claws) on ice, or ski for winter mountaineering, or pitons (iron spikes) on rocks was partly due to the fact that every new device of this type adds yet another

specialised technique to the repertoire which the complete mountaineer must master, and partly to a sporting prejudice against anything which increases the odds *against* the mountain. "I remember," writes J. H. Doughty, "listening to a well-known climber who objected to the ascent of the Eagle's Nest Direct in rubbers on a dry day. 'It does not,' he complained, 'give the rocks a chance.' This is a hard saying, and suggests a grim doctrine; but I think we may find in it the clue to what really lies at the bottom of mountaineering conventions, or at any rate those which are worth discussing. *They are the unwritten rules of the game.* Our Spartan friend was adopting precisely the attitude of those others, who in their several spheres, object to batsmen defending the wicket with their legs, or golfers using ribbed clubs, or sportsmen shooting at sitting birds; all things which tend to make the job in hand too easy, which fail to give the pitch, the course, the bird, or whatever animate or inanimate opponent it may be, a chance."

Animate or inanimate. Those who, like R. L. G. Irving, are uncertain to which category their mountain opponents should be relegated feel particularly strongly about hammering pitons (iron spikes) into rocks. "If you wrestle with a friend," he writes, "the whole essence of the thing is spoiled if you use sharp claws to get a hold. Ice is but a sort of grease the mountain puts on its body to make it more elusive; its removal is no violation of any sporting instinct; loose stones, too, are but portions of his scaly skin that are dead; the piton must be driven into the living rock to make it fast."

"The fisherman is not only concerned," writes Frank Smythe, "with the number of fish he catches; if he were he would employ dynamite. The Germans of to-day prefer dynamite."

(*Some* Germans, certainly, but by no means all. Perhaps the finest Alpine record in the inter-war period was that of Welzenbach, greatest of the German mountaineers, and Welzenbach certainly did not belong to the dynamite school.)

Frank Smythe is as severe on oxygen as on pitons. "It may be expedient to climb Mount Everest with oxygen apparatus, but speaking personally I would prefer to fail on that mountain without oxygen than I would to climb it with oxygen, for to my mind the whole charm of mountaineering lies in the employment of skill and energy with the minimum of artificial aid."

VII

The Victorian Alpine Club was largely recruited from the upper-middle and middle classes, the residuary legatees of the "Glorious Revolution" of 1688, which transferred power from the monarch to the aristocracy. The Victorian Liberals supported the middle classes against the aristocracy, and though the feudal tradition still survived, it was fighting a rearguard action. Feudalism recognised the distinction between the man and his office, and it is far from certain that the uncritical acceptance of differences of rank aggravates the difficulties of intercourse between men as men. The flunkie is uncommon in a genuinely feudal system. Nothing, for instance, could be less servile than the relation of a Highland clansman to his chief, and nobody could have been more accessible to their subjects than the Kings of France. The envoy of the Medici merchant princes, who ruled Florence, was amazed to see three down-at-heel Parisians stop the King of France in the street to air a grievance. The King listened to them gravely, with his feet in the mud, and then resumed his stroll, like any other citizen. Pepys, in an England which was still feudal, often invited his maid-servant to join him and his wife for a little music after dinner, an invitation which was offered without condescension and accepted without deference.

The difficulties of human intercourse are not *necessarily* eased by the official abolition of rank. Such, at least, would seem to be the moral of an amusing article on *Hollywood's Glamour Boys* in *The American Mercury* (January, 1942). "One of the features of Mr. Tolliver's studios was its caste system. In a studio whose owners bellowed Americanism from the house-tops, and hired a 50,000-dollar-a-year stooge to tell the world what great patriots they were, there existed a series of class distinctions that would make the East Indian social structure look like a Tammany clambake."

England in the nineteenth century was in a state of transition from a class-conscious to a class self-conscious society. The Victorian Liberals in the proportion to which they committed themselves to an attack on the privileges of birth became increasingly self-conscious about their own status, equally anxious to protect themselves against the patronage of their social superiors, and to resist the contamination of their social inferiors. "Kings and cockneys, I thought," wrote Leslie Stephen, a Liberal, "may be excellent

people in their way. I love cockneys because they are my neighbours, and the love of our neighbour is a Christian duty. I revere kings because I was taught to do so at school, to say nothing of the sermons and church services in which the same duty was impressed. But they have in common the property of being very objectionable neighbours at an hotel." Stephen's Liberalism drew the line at cheap trippers. He was certainly not unique in his belief that "The Playground of Europe" should be reserved for the upper-middle classes. It would be easy to quote a catena of passages from Alpine literature all of which tacitly assume that an appreciation of mountain scenery is the monopoly of a particular class. I cannot subscribe to this doctrine, for I have met mountaineers, of irreproachable social status, who seemed to me arrant philistines, mountaineers for whom the Alps were nothing but an arena for athletic feats, and I have also met cheap trippers whose lives had been transformed by "a week in lovely Lucerne for Five Guineas."

"Rank," said Jowett, "is not a dispensation of providence, but it is a fact." A fact, however, of infinitely less importance than other differences between man and man, such as, for instance, the distinction in the Alpine world between the genuine lover of mountains and the man who collects peaks in the same spirit as another man collects stamps.

The Victorian Alpine Club demanded from candidates not only a technical but also a social qualification, an anomaly for which there was no rational justification, for a man has an inalienable right, irrespective of social standing, to belong to the national institution which is responsible for his particular sport. I was one of those responsible for eliminating from the rules of the Ski Club of Great Britain, patterned at its foundation on the Alpine Club, all pretence of a qualification, social or technical. None the less I cannot pretend to regret that the Alpine Club was what it was, a perfect period piece. The Victorian Alpine Club, in spite of and indeed because of its anomalies, had a character all its own, a character which has left an indelible mark on Alpine history.

The committee of the Alpine Club examined the climbing record of candidates and submitted the names of those who were approved to the next General Meeting. Voting at the General Meeting was by ballot, and one black ball in ten excluded. As the attendance at a General Meeting seldom exceeded a hundred, the ballot

system gave a small clique the chance to exclude candidates whose election, as in the case of Mummery, was desired by the overwhelming majority of the Club.

In the Alpine Club, as in other clubs, the members who indulged in irresponsible blackballing were those whose personal status depended not on their own achievements but on the prestige of the Club of which they were members, and who believed that this prestige was raised by every successful attempt to blackball better men than themselves.

Irresponsible blackballing led to the resignation of one great pioneer, T. S. Kennedy, the conqueror of the Dent Blanche, who resigned after two candidates, whom he proposed, had been blackballed for no discoverable reason. A few years later Mummery was blackballed. Mummery was an original and aggressive pioneer, not only in mountaineering but also in economics. Many of his financial heresies, on the subject of money and credit, are in the process of being accepted to-day. Like other pioneers he was not always tactful in his references to more conventional people, and he seems to have annoyed elderly members of the Club with his remarks about back-numbers. Envy of his outstanding achievements, the conquest of Grépon and Charmoz, may have been a factor in his case, as in others, such as two British climbers, both of whom, at a later date, accomplished some remarkable climbs among the Chamonix aiguilles. Finally, Mummery was a tanner by trade, a fact which is alleged to have provoked a blackball by a member who cherished the innocent illusion that he came of ancient lineage. Mummery, it would seem, was never *legally* elected.

"I took charge of the ballot box," Coolidge confided to me, "and when nobody was looking, I shifted some balls from the 'No' to the 'Aye' part of the box." He chirruped a reminiscent chuckle. "Yes, I *cheated* Mummery into the Club."

Coolidge's normal bias against a mountaineer who raised the standard of achievement was offset in Mummery's case by his personal feud with the member whom he believed to be responsible for the blackballing of Mummery, but it has been suggested that Coolidge may not have been at the meeting at which Mummery was elected. The question is discussed in the notes at the end of this book.

The Alpine Club was, with perhaps one exception, the last Club to abandon a method of election which had at one time been

universal in Clubland but which experience had proved to be mischievous and capricious in its operation. By a curious coincidence the General Meeting which transferred the power of electing members to the Committee was the first Club meeting attended by a member who had been blackballed in his youth under the old rule, and who had subsequently been elected an honorary member of mountaineering clubs on both sides of the Atlantic. He appeared to listen with amusement to the speech of a young member who cited his case as an argument for the proposed transference of powers to the Committee. "A mountaineer with an international reputation was blackballed by the kind of dreary old dug-out who crawls out of a hole to drop black balls in the ballot box." The dreary old dug-out in question was sitting in the front row. After the transference of the power of election to the Committee had been duly approved, the newly-elected member congratulated the President, Sir Claud Schuster, "on opening the stable door after the steed is in."

VIII

Church history, it has been said, largely consists in the quarrels of good men, and "the strange mysticism which sets mountaineering apart from other sports" perhaps explains the disconcerting resemblance between the *odium theologicum* and the *odium Alpinum*. Agassiz quarrelled with Forbes, and Forbes was attacked by Tyndall. Tyndall quarrelled with Whymper, Whymper with Coolidge, and Coolidge, the lord of battles, with any mountaineer who was prepared to gratify his insatiable appetite for feuds. Tyndall was vain and cantankerous, and lost the sympathy of many leading members of the Alpine Club (such as Alfred Wills) by the vindictive tone of his attacks on Forbes. At the Alpine Club winter dinner of 1861 Leslie Stephen, so Claud Schuster informs me, "gave a burlesque account of an imagined ascent of the Gabelhorn, and it is supposed that he then used the pleasantries" (about science in connection with mountaineering) "which he subsequently introduced into his account of the Zinal Rothorn." Tyndall, who had no sense of humour, promptly resigned his membership of the Club.

Coolidge combined the *odium theologicum* with the *odium Alpinum* but his occasional duels with the Anglican chaplains at Grindelwald, where he lived for many years, were only skirmishes compared

with the totalitarian war which he waged on the Alpine front. Like Hitler his patience was easily exhausted, but unlike Hitler he is never known to have signed a non-aggression pact with an intended victim.

His most famous battle began when he impugned the veracity of Whympers's story (and illustration) of Almer's jump across a notch, alleged by Coolidge to be non-existent, in the ridge of the Ecrins. Whympers demanded that this attack upon his honour should be brought before a special General Meeting of the Alpine Club, but the Committee very sensibly refused to be involved, whereupon Coolidge resigned from the Club, not as I said in *Mountain Jubilee* to evade the General Meeting which Whympers had demanded, but as Mr. Oughton, the Assistant Secretary of the Club, has since proved, because Coolidge was indignant with the Committee for failing to endorse his attack on Whympers's veracity. Coolidge was elected an honorary member in 1904, and resigned again in 1910 as a protest against the proposal of the Committee that Sir Edward Davidson should be elected President. In 1923 he was once again elected an honorary member; and did not live long enough to tender a third resignation.

As a sample of the kind of *trivia* which provided Coolidge with a succulent feud, the birth of the great Coolidge-Davidson vendetta may, perhaps, merit a passing mention. Davidson fired the first shot. Coolidge had inadvertently omitted the first c in Schreckhorn in a tribute to his guide Christian Almer, a tribute written in Almer's *Führerbuch*, as the little book is called which the guide produces at the end of an engagement for the comments of his appreciative clients. Davidson noting with pleasure the misspelling of Coolidge, the infallible pedant, added an anonymous comment, "The usual spelling among Germans is Schreckhorn." In the same *Führerbuch* Davidson's climbing partner had spelt Jungfrau without a g, and Davidson had added his signature, thus endorsing the tribute in which Jungfrau was spelt without a g.

In 1896 Almer's *Führerbuch* was reproduced in *facsimile*. Coolidge recognised Davidson's handwriting, and was infuriated by the public advertisement of his lapse. "I hunted and I hunted," he exclaimed to me, "until at last I found that Davidson had put his name to Jungfrau without a g." And his little beard fluttered with excitement as he recalled that fierce moment of anticipatory revenge. Douglas Freshfield, who shared Coolidge's dislike of

Davidson, reviewed the *Führerbuch* in the *Alpine Journal* (xviii. 69). Davidson's distinguished handwriting was well known, and by this time most members of the Club were aware that Davidson was the author of the anonymous comment on Coolidge's spelling.

"Few even of the most pedantic critics," wrote Freshfield, "will think the worse of Mr. W. E. Davidson for putting his name under Jungfrau without a g, or of Mr. Coolidge and two other climbers for leaving out the first c in Schreckhorn. . . . It is true that an unhappy Alpine snob, to whom even Almer's book was not sacred, has defaced one of its pages by the superfluous gloss, 'the usual spelling among Germans is Schreckhorn.' We cannot affect any sympathy for this specimen of a class well known to all who have turned over old hotel books in the punishment that has overtaken him." To this Davidson replied with great indignation "I have not written the word in question either with a g, without a g, or in any other way, from one end of the *Führerbuch* to the other." "Mr. Davidson," replied Douglas Freshfield with the dignity which this momentous issue clearly demanded, "can hardly need to be reminded that both in law and literature we are all responsible for what we sign."

Coolidge died suddenly at Grindelwald on May 8th, 1926, in the middle of the General Strike, in consequence of which my wife and I were the only English mourners at his grave. I was living at Grindelwald at the time and enjoyed—intermittently—the privilege of his friendship. Just before he died, Sir Martin Conway came to tea. "Coolidge," he began, "has told me to forbid you his house." I asked what crime had provoked this interdict. "Well, you know Murray's guide has recently been re-issued, and Coolidge maintains that he ought to have been asked to edit it." "Yes, I know, but what has that to do with me?" "Well, the Editor expresses in the preface his indebtedness to you for some information you gave him. You've been thanked in a book which Coolidge ought to have been invited to edit." Conway laughed. "You look surprised, my dear Arnold, but let me assure you that Coolidge has often declared war with far less provocation than that!"

IX

In conclusion let me revert to Ruskin's principal charge against the Alpine Club. "The real ground for reprehension of Alpine climbing is that, with less cause, it excites more vanity than any other

athletic skill . . . while no good soldier talks of the charge he led, nor any good sailor of the helm he held—every man among the Alps seems to lose his senses and modesty with the fall of the barometer, and returns from his Nephelo-coccygia brandishing his ice-axe in everybody's face."

It is relevant to recall the fact that Ruskin was at Chamonix in 1851 when Albert Smith climbed Mont Blanc. He had witnessed the noisy jubilation with which the party were welcomed back, and had gone up to the Montenvers on the same day as Albert Smith. "There has been a cockney ascent of Mont Blanc," Ruskin wrote to his father, "of which I believe you are soon to hear in London." It was probably a distasteful memory of Smith's cheerful bombast which inspired, fourteen years later, the famous sentence, "you fill the quietude of their valleys with gunpowder blasts, and rush home, red with cutaneous eruption of conceit, and voluble with convulsive hiccough of self-satisfaction."

This attack, unjust even to Albert Smith the showman, was a grotesque travesty of the attitude and demeanour of those well-bred clerics, dons, barristers, scientists and civil servants who set the tone of the Alpine Club. These dignified Victorians were masters of the technique of the trumpet. They might breathe quietly down their own trumpets, but they never blew them. Whatever else they were, they were not vulgar in their self-assertion. Complacent, perhaps, but never bumptious. And to accuse them of complacency is merely to assert that they were not wholly free from a failing which is a common, if not universal, attribute of the successful.

"To the intellectual Victorian," writes Geoffrey Young, "human life was still in its heyday. All men were still perfectible, and all knowledge still knowable; reason existed to discipline emotion, and any as yet unharnessed forces, in a universe ordered by the intellect, must be at least capable of classification under one of the headings already determined by the educated mind." And of the Alpine pioneers Young writes, "Confident, vital and cultivated, many of them dictators of thought in their several spheres, they had walked out of their academic or legal grooves and found themselves on heights as unexplored as the poles and as rich with romance as Xanadu. With a stride they, the men of the study, had out-distanced generations of explorers and sportsmen, had opened up an untrodden realm which artists acclaimed as a new world of

beauty, and had launched a novel activity for mankind. They could be justifiably proud of the figure which the church, the law, science and literature were cutting in the field of adventure."

Though their "exaltation over rather easy victories strikes us," to quote Leslie Stephen, "as a little extravagant," it was an exaltation inspired by the infectious joy of discovery rather than by personal pride. Most of the pioneers would have been ready to endorse Leslie Stephen's modest, far too modest, estimate of his personal contribution to the great climbs with which his name will always be linked. "I utterly repudiate," writes Stephen, "the doctrine that Alpine travellers are or ought to be the heroes of Alpine adventures. The true way at least to describe all my Alpine ascents is that Michel or Anderegg or Lauener succeeded in performing a feat requiring skill, strength, and courage, the difficulty of which was much increased by the difficulty of taking with him his knapsack and his employer."

Admittedly guideless climbing has eliminated this particular corrective to conceit, but even so Mr. Irving's variant of Ruskin's charge—"if self-satisfaction be the aim of climbing, then it must be admitted that the modern expert achieves it in a degree which Bernard Shaw himself might envy"—if "some modern experts," is only true of a small minority of the climbing élite. Herford, for instance, who was killed in the first World War, a shy reserved boy, a real mountain eremite, seemed to be too preoccupied with his quasi-mystical relations to his mountain opponents to be interested in the reactions of the climbing fraternity to his amazing exploits.

Our verdict on the members of any group, religious, scientific or sporting, will necessarily be influenced by our doctrine of man. Those who accept what Chesterton calls "the one grand and logical basis of all optimism—the doctrine of original sin . . . that large and beautiful and benignant explanation that the heart of man is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked" are not perturbed to discover that men do not necessarily cease to be selfish and vain even if they join a Religious Order, or the Royal Society or the Alpine Club. It is, however, legitimate to ask whether these particular institutions tend to correct or to aggravate the vanity of their members. Some, at least, of the conditions which, in other sports, tend to make the vain men still vainer are absent in mountaineering. Except in the case of Everest expe-

ditions, the British Press does not follow mountaineering with interest. The names of our leading mountaineers, with few exceptions, are unknown outside the Alpine fraternity. The mountaineer's vanity is neither aggravated by publicity, nor fed by the applause of crowds. And though it is no longer true, to quote Leslie Stephen, that "Alpine exploits that require less physical prowess than almost any other sport" or that "the good amateur still feels himself the hopeless inferior of half the Alpine peasants whom he sees," I do not think that the small proportion of conceited mountaineers is any higher in the modern Club than in the Club of Leslie Stephen's day, or that mountaineers, as such, are more prone to vanity than other people. The latest critic to revive Ruskin's criticism of Alpine vanity is my friend D. B. Wyndham Lewis, from whose entertaining column in *The Tatler* I copied, in 1942, the following amusing attack on the climbing fraternity. "A member of the Alpine Club wrote to the papers a little time ago, boasting that Commando training is based largely on the principles evolved by mountain climbers for the past fifty years, and another addict did so last week. The rugged virtues claimed by Alpinists, openly or obliquely, in their writings are courage, perseverance in right, strength of mind and body, purity, chivalry, altruism, fortitude, beauty of spirit, prudence, modesty and a few more we forget."

Though mountaineers will not readily accept as accurate Wyndham Lewis's interpretation of their attitude, diligent research would, no doubt, provide quotations from Alpine literature in which the rugged virtues which he enumerates are, in fact, claimed "openly or obliquely." "There are no criminals among them," writes a well-known mountaineer of the "Men of the Mountains," "and none even who find salvation in casting off the fetters of morality. . . . There must be something about the mountain way that either causes the criminal type to avoid it, or else men cease to feel morality a servitude upon it."

Wyndham Lewis's attack upon the Alpine Club is, in effect, an attack upon one of the sacred conventions of human intercourse, the convention that a man may blow the trumpet of his group without incurring the charge of self-praise. Few people realise that to praise the group to which one belongs is a form of self-praise. Mummery, for instance, would have been shocked and surprised if he had been accused of maintaining the proposition, "Mummery is the noblest work of God," yet this conclusion follows logically

from his major premise "the true mountaineer is 'the noblest work of God'" (see page 149) and the implied minor premise "Mummery is a true mountaineer."

Wyndham Lewis's attack on mountaineers is really a subversive onslaught on the whole principle of *esprit de corps*, a principle of the greatest social value, for men should be encouraged to praise and take pride in the group to which they belong in order that, under the influence of *esprit de corps*, they may attain to standards of virtue and courage far beyond their reach as unaided individuals.

X

I have entitled this chapter *Portrait of a Club*, and I might perhaps have called it *Portrait with Warts*, for I have done my best to obey the Cromwellian injunction. The warts, like the Club, are characteristically English. We are, or we were, a conservative nation with a strong bias against violent revolutions. "A disposition to preserve and an ability to improve," said Burke, "taken together would be my standard of a statesman." There is something to be said for a Second Chamber in sport as in politics. The most progressive of cars is all the better for four-wheel brakes. In so far as the Alpine Club had acted as a second chamber in its resistance to political mountaineering and excessive competition its influence has been wholly beneficial, and it would be difficult to prove that the Club impeded or even delayed any genuinely healthy development. I am unpersuaded by the late J. H. Doughty, who writes, "In many ways the prestige and power of that great body (The Alpine Club) have acted as a drag on our native climbing, much in the same way as the mighty Aristotle, by the mere weight of his authority and the tremendous veneration in which he was held, lay for centuries like a blight on the independent development of scientific thought in Western Europe." But it must be remembered that though conservative opinion in the Club has opposed many innovations, every great advance in mountaineering with two exceptions, ski-mountaineering and the piton technique, has owed at least as much to members of the Club as to foreign climbers. Of these two developments, the piton technique is—at best—of doubtful value, and the development of ski-mountaineering was unaffected, even among British climbers, by the obscurantist attitude of the Club as a whole. I remember defending this new

development in the columns of *The Field* not only against distinguished members of the Club who maintained that "ski are only suitable for the ascent of gentle grass or shale summits or as aids to serious mountaineering to enable one to reach a club hut" but also against Mr. Coolidge who seemed to think that a careful computation of my age from the documents at his disposal was relevant to the discussion, but I was stimulated rather than discouraged by this opposition, and delighted that the Alpine Ski Club which I founded, rather than the Alpine Club of which I was not then a member, should have the sole credit for the British contribution to ski-mountaineering.

The Alpine Club, like England, is in a state of transition. The serene complacency of the eminent Victorians has vanished for ever from our world, and I suppose this is all to the good, but there are moments when I recall with nostalgic regret the spacious confidence of an England which believed that it had nothing to learn from other countries and everything to teach, the England which sent Garibaldi a *précis* of the British constitution on the eve of his Sicilian expedition. Of that England the Victorian Club was at once a product and a mirror, and for that reason its anomalies, and even its occasional absurdities, have a period charm.

Shortly after Dunkirk I asked Lord Lloyd, who was then in the Government, to use his good offices on my behalf. I was planning a lecture tour in the States, and was anxious to get to the front as a war correspondent. I pointed out that it was essential for a lecturer to have seen something of the war. "You needn't worry," said Lord Lloyd, "you'll see quite enough of the war in England before long." "You mean we shall be bombed?" "Yes, and invaded." "And what then?" I asked. Lord Lloyd shrugged his shoulders. For the first, and almost the last time in the war, I faced the fact that we might be defeated. I felt weighed down with an immense despondency. As a boy I had always re-read *The Playground of Europe* when life seemed unusually black, and it was, I suppose, the same instinctive turning towards the hills for help that sent me into the Alpine Club, which had not as yet evacuated its library and pictures. I paused before the gallery of the ex-presidents. How magnificent and characteristically Victorian are many of those splendid heads, John Ball, Kennedy, Leslie Stephen and Grove.

. . . In that moment they seemed to me the epitome of an Augustan age. I envied them from the bottom of my heart. . They, at least, had never faced the possibility of a Conqueror gloating over stricken London from the balcony of Buckingham Palace.

Hitler had assured the Army that they were inaugurating a thousand years of German rule. If he was right, what then? Would men in years to come recall the English way of life with regret for something which, for all its complacency and all its great defects, still stood for forgotten standards of freedom and chivalry? Or would we only be remembered as the fools who had thrown away the hard-won fruits of victory in 1918? Of one thing I felt certain. If the mountaineers of Europe were regimented under hireling *Sport-Führers*, it would not be in England alone that climbers, born under the old dispensation, would remember with gratitude and regret, a Club which was certainly national but never nationalistic, and which had, from the first, regarded itself as the trustee for something more important than the interests of its members, the traditions and repute of the noblest of all conceivable sports.

CHAPTER X

THE BRITISH CONTRIBUTION TO MOUNTAINEERING LITERATURE

I

THE *pietas* of the Alpine Club has always protected our patristic literature from profane criticism. "Fifty years have passed," wrote Donald Robertson in the memorable paper in which he castigated *contemporary* Alpine literature, "since the appearance of *Peaks, Passes and Glaciers*, a volume so fascinating, so inspiring a gospel of adventure and full free life, that the call summoned to the hills an army of seekers after the promised gold."

I can still remember the intense pleasure with which I read these volumes as a boy, and I can also remember the disillusion with which I re-read them as a young man in search for suitable passages for inclusion in my anthology *The Englishman in the Alps*. They have been over-praised for the same reason that so many classical descriptions of nature have been over-praised, because they provide pegs on which we can hang our own Alpine memories. But if there be no such memories, the spell does not work. John Richard Green was a famous historian, a good judge of literature but no mountaineer and here is his verdict on *Peaks, Passes and Glaciers*.

"What is it which makes men in Alpine travel-books write as men never write elsewhere? What is the origin of a style unique in literature, which misses both the sublime and the ridiculous, and constantly hops from tall-talk to a mirth feeble and inane. Why is it that the senior tutor, who is so hard on a bit of bad Latin, plunges at the sight of an Alp into English inconceivable, hideous?"

This is unjust to writers who described their adventures in straightforward and unpretentious prose, all that could reasonably be demanded from those who, for the most part, were not practised writers, and who only put pen to paper under the influence of a great enthusiasm, an enthusiasm which they succeeded, in spite of literary inexperience, in communicating to most of their readers.

Unpractised writers, endowed with great natural talent, have often written noble prose or poetry, but it is unreasonable to demand literary excellence, as a matter of course, from those who have

served no apprenticeship to the craft of letters, and it is no accident that the finest passages in the Alpine literature of the nineteenth century should have come from the pens of Leslie Stephen and Martin Conway both of whom made a great position for themselves in English literature, the first as a literary critic and biographer and the second as a critic of art.

In the course of collecting material for an anthology which is to be called *Switzerland in English Prose and Poetry* and which is intended as a companion volume to the present book, I have been impressed by the high quality of many contributions to Alpine literature by men who were in no sense professional writers. I hope and believe that this verdict will be endorsed by those who read my anthology when it appears. In this brief chapter I can only indicate some of the characteristics of the British contribution to mountain literature.

A poll of British mountaineers would probably give first place to Stephen's *The Playground of Europe*. No writing is more evocative than Stephen's, both of the scenes which we love and of the emotions which those scenes provoke. His affectation of bluff and hard-headed cynicism is at times irritating, and not only irritating but absurd, for Stephen was a sensitive introvert, but fortunately the irritating asides—"But I am verging on the poetical" "Tall talk is luckily an object of suspicion to Englishmen"—are too infrequent to mar his noblest chapters, and pass unnoticed except by those who read him with what Young calls "a close and affectionate suspicion," but this critical minority "soon become aware," as Young remarks, "of the dexterous brain playing battledore and shuttlecock with emotions he had experienced—but not approved."

I have quoted on page 30 a passage from Stephen's chapter "Sunset on Mont Blanc," which seems to me in its felicitous blend of simile, metaphor, and analogy a perfect example of word-painting. Here is a passage from his chapter on the "The Alps in Winter."

"Between the lake and the snow-clad hills lie the withered forests, the delicate reds and browns of the deciduous foliage giving just the touch of warmth required to contrast the coolness of the surrounding scenery. And higher up, the pine-forests still display their broad zones of purple, not quite in that uncompromising spirit which reduces them in the intensity of summer shadow to





mere patches of pitchy blackness, but mellowed by the misty air, and with their foliage judiciously softened with snow-dust like the powdered hair of a last century beauty. . . .

"Lake and forest and mountain are lighted by the low sun, casting strange misty shadows to portentous heights, to fade in the vast depths of the sky, or to lose themselves imperceptibly on the mountain flanks. As the steamboat runs into the shadow of the hills, a group of pine-trees on the sky-line comes near the sun, and is suddenly transformed into molten silver ; or some snow-ridge, pale as death on the nearest side, is lighted up along its summit with a series of points glowing with intense brilliancy, as though the peaks were being kindled by a stupendous burning-glass."

Martin Conway, whose book on *The Early Flemish Painters* gave him a European reputation, looked at mountains with an eye trained to perceive the subtlest of effects. "Any goose sees glory" in Matterhorn or Jungfrau, but only a connoisseur of mountain beauty can appreciate the delicate loveliness of the Plaine Morte, to the unobservant nothing but a flat and featureless expanse of snow, and only a master of evocative writing could have described the Plaine Morte as Conway describes it :

"It is so large, so simple, and so secluded. It seems like the portion of some strange world. Its effect of size is increased by the insignificance of the wall that surrounds it, enough to shut out all distant views, and no more. The sense of novelty, of strangeness, came upon me, such as I felt when all the Hispar glacier under its dark roof of cloud first opened on my view. Beautiful too, it was with the beauty of all great snowfields ; its large undulations, its rippled surface glinting under the touch of the low risen sun. To add to its mystery there came over the sky a veil of mist which presently reduced the brilliancy of the day, increasing the apparent size of everything and lengthening all distances. Two birds like swallows twittered around, and seemed out of place. The further we went the more profound was the solitude."

Claud Schuster's *Peaks and Pleasant Pastures*, one of the most enchanting of all mountain books, is full of evocative miniatures, such as for instance : "To such a day succeeds the incomparable pomp of eve and when the sun has passed down into the tangles of the French foothills, and the peaks, each a separate sun now he is gone, have burnt out in turn, one by one, through every variety

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of colour, night, marching slowly but visibly from a hundred miles away, hushes the streams and hangs her own jewels in the heavens. You have at once a darkness and a brilliancy which you have learned to associate only with the tropics. The shadows are blacker for you, and the stars closer than for the plain dwellers, and night 'doth like an Aethiop bride appear.' Very reluctantly you knock out your last pipe and creep into your blankets, leaving the moon full over the Rutor."

There are many passages in Young's writing which evoke a mountain scene in a few lines, as for instance this from his description of a bivouac below the great north face of the Weisshorn: "A current of wind blew the clouds from round our peak, and I could watch it towering, frostily remote and lit by an unseen moon, through a window of clouds that ravelled into silver where they framed its image," a passage which I far prefer in this its first appearance (*Cornhill*, 1912) to its more elaborated form on p. 142-3 of *On High Hills*.

It would be impossible within the limits of this chapter to prove that the proportion of English climbers with a gift of evocative writing is surprisingly high, but lest I should be accused of a narrow insularity let my final quotation of evocative passages be taken from a delightful book by an Australian skier (Elyne Mitchell in *Australia's Alps*). "The stars were paling above Townsend and the gleam of the moon had died, leaving a cold, still darkness in Geechi till a shaft of light crept down the sky, moth-winged and uncertain, to touch Mount Twynam and to filter slowly through the faint mist. Like a shimmer of golden gauze it descended on to the mysterious river flats."

II

Writers who can interpret the romance of mountain adventure far outnumber the writers with a genuine gift for describing mountain scenery. The romance of mountain conquest has seldom been translated more effectively into words than by Whympers in that great classic *Scrambles amongst the Alps*, but mountain beauty, as I have tried to show in that chapter of *Mountain Jubilee*, of which Whympers is the theme, meant very little to the conqueror of the Matterhorn. The most effective illustrations in his book are either those which show men in action against the

mountains (crossing a bergschrund) or the mountains in action against man, as for instance the superb "A Cannonade on the Matterhorn." It is, perhaps, worth while to recall a fact which every critic of Whymper, including his biographer, Frank Smythe, has ignored that we owe the pictures in Whymper's book to gifted artists such as James Mahoney. Whymper only supplied "slight memoranda" and finished the engraving after the artists had drawn the pictures on wood.

Whymper had little interest in mountains which had been climbed. He only climbed five peaks which he knew, at the time of the ascent, to have been previously ascended, and only seven peaks which had been previously ascended. Of these he climbed Mont Pelvoux under the impression that he was making a first ascent, and the Dent Blanche to settle a doubt as to whether Kennedy had reached the summit. A whole range of feeling and attitude separates Whymper's factual approach to the mountains as a technical problem of exploration, and Irving's mystical approach to the mountain as a personality to be adored, but Whymper will always rank among the first and the greatest of those who have translated into words the romance of the mountain challenge to the spirit of man.

Mummery, like Whymper, must be classified not among the word-painters of scenery but among the interpreters of mountain adventure. It would have been as easy for John Richard Green to pick holes in Mummery's *My Climbs in the Alps and Caucasus* as in *Peaks, Passes and Glaciers*. Mummery's book is a characteristic product of an age which enjoyed polysyllabic humour, an age in which references, such as Mummery's, to the Devil as "his Satanic majesty" still raised a snigger, and when one could still provoke a smile by arch remarks about swearing. "It is distinctly unpleasant when a companion, whom you think is enjoying himself suddenly informs you that he is doubtful of his power to stand in the steps. At such times nothing but the fact that one has been brought up surrounded by the best religious influences, prevents the ejaculation of the strongest and most soul-satisfying expletives known to the English tongue."

Mummery's facetiousness is often rather heavy-handed, as for instance: "Burgener then proposed, amid the reverent and appreciative silence of the company, that libations should be duly poured from a bottle of Bouvier. This religious ceremony having

been fittingly observed (the Western form, I take it, of the prayers offered by a pious Buddhist on reaching the crest of some Tibetan pass)." Passages such as this almost justify Green's remarks about "mirth feeble and inane."

The contrast between the facetiousness which dates and the timelessness of authentic humour emerges when we compare the funny passages in Mummery's book with the humour of a contemporary classic *The Diary of a Nobody*.

But in spite of irritating mannerisms Mummery's book deserves the high rank which it has been accorded among the classics of our craft, for the book glows with an intense vitality, and radiates from every page the joy of battle. Mummery not only revelled in the adventure of the hills, but he also loved them for themselves. The opening passage of his book, perhaps the noblest opening passage in all Alpine literature, reflects the flame of a mountain passion which owed as much to the beauty of the mountains as to the joy of battle with unconquered peaks.

"At the age of fifteen the crags of the Via Mala and the snows of the Théodule roused a passion within me that has grown with years, and has to no small extent moulded my life and thought. It has led me into regions of such fairy beauty that the fabled wonders of Xanadu seem commonplace beside them; it has brought me friends who may be relied on in fair weather and in foul, and it has stored my mind with memories that are treasures, corruptible neither by moth nor rust, sickness nor old age. My boyish delight in the great white peaks towering above the gloom of pines is still awakened when the lumbering diligence rolls through the gorge of the Diosaz or when the Matterhorn rises from out the foliage of Val Tournanche. I remember, as if it were yesterday, my first sight of the great mountain. It was shining in all the calm majesty of a September moon, and in the stillness of an autumn night, it seemed the very embodiment of mystery and a fitting dwelling-place for the spirits with which old legends people its stone-swept slopes."

Contrast this with the opening passage of *Alpine Studies* by the Rev. W. A. B. Coolidge. "It so happens that the first snowy mountains on which I ever set eyes were those of the Maritime Alps. A very delicate lad, the doctors ordered me away from my native land (U.S.A.) to spend the winter of 1864-5 at Cannes, then comparatively little known. I was accompanied by my

mother, my only sister, and my mother's sister (and so my aunt) Miss Brevoort, who later on was to climb many Alpine summits with me. I was ill with typhoid fever (caught in Paris) for the greater part of the winter. But in the spring of 1865 (being then only 14 years of age) I made many excursions in the neighbourhood, though practically none on foot, my favourite spot being the island of St. Honorat, one of the Lérins islands, just opposite Cannes. Thence, as well as from Cannes itself, I must often have seen the snowy peaks of the Maritime Alps on the horizon. But I paid no attention whatever to them, my mind being absorbed by the scheme (partly carried out) of writing a history of the Lérins islands."

The boy whose imagination was not fired by the beauty of the Maritime Alps in spring, because he was too pre-occupied with his monograph on the Lérins islands evolved into the man who treated the Alps as pegs for historical monographs, incredibly tedious, and who described his own expeditions in articles the aridity of which was unrelieved by the slightest hint that he was aware of a beauty which he certainly made no attempt to describe.

III

Acquiescence in surface explanations is a characteristic of the Victorian contribution to Alpine literature. We only know the Victorian climbers in so far as they unconsciously reveal *themselves* in their writings. Carrel lives in Whymper's pages, and so does old Sémiond. "Ah!" said old Sémiond, "as to fleas, I don't pretend to be different from anyone else—I *have them*," but Whymper's English companions on his various climbs, Walker, Moore, and even Hudson are mere labels which could be interchanged at any point of the narrative without producing an effect of abrupt transition. And Whymper's *Scrambles* is, in this respect, characteristic of Alpine literature as a whole. The Alpine Journal obituaries skated over thin ice with even greater skill than obituaries in the contemporary periodicals. It was not until 1931, when Sir Claud Schuster published his *Men, Women and Mountains*, that any of the great figures of Victorian mountaineering came to life. Schuster entered into the valley of dry bones "and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army."

Again nothing could be less penetrating or less illuminating than Alpine literary criticism. Once a book had been recognised as an Alpine classic, *causa finita est*. It was only the profane who dared to criticise, a John Richard Green or a Francis Gribble, neither of whom were mountaineers. "One or two of them," wrote Mr. Gribble of the Alpine pioneers, "no doubt, struck out a little literature as the result of the impact of novel experiences upon naïve minds. The files of the Alpine journals of all countries might serve as anthology of almost every kind of literary fault." Had the literary criticism of the elect been slightly more penetrating, the attacks of the profane might have been less unjust.

The same surface treatment characterises most attempts to discuss the central problem of our cult, the mystery of our reaction to mountain beauty. The Victorians were emotional about science, and unscientific about their emotions. I have searched Victorian Alpine literature in vain for any attempt at a scientific interpretation of the emotion which mountains awaken in the mind of man. In their approach to this problem Alpine mystics are, for the most part, deductive rather than inductive. They begin with themselves and deduce from their own instinctive beliefs a philosophy of the mountains. Thus a mountaineer, who dislikes all dogmas but his own, assures us that "the religion of the mountains is not one of cant or ritual" which is as helpful as if we were to be informed that the religion of the mountains was not one of hysteria or taking off one's hat to a lady. If, on the other hand we begin with the mountain, and apply the inductive method to the emotion which the mountain awakens in our mind, and attempt to explain that emotion in particular and our reaction to beauty in general in scientific terms, we shall soon discover that no purely mechanistic explanation of the evolutionary process can begin to account for a spiritual faculty, and we shall be driven back on neo-Platonism for our solution. The greatest service which Science can render to man is to provide a negative proof of the inability of Science to explain spiritual realities in terms of material factors. And though Alpine mysticism neither supports nor negates the dogmas of any particular religion, we can prove by rational argument that it is impossible to reconcile our response to mountain beauty with materialism or with any purely mechanistic theory of evolution.

Mr. Irving would, I think, accept this conclusion, but he seems

anxious to conceal from the reader the theistic implications which are implicit in his premises. He is hampered by a paralysing shyness in his attempts to formulate his mountain credo, his discreet references to his Creator can only be identified by the unnecessary capitals of the personal pronouns referring to Deity. The English translators of the Bible from the translators of the authorised version to Monsignor Ronald Knox never capitalise a pronoun unless it is the first word of a sentence. The capitalising complex is characteristic of that particular form of reverence which appears in an age of religious decline, the reverence of the agnostic who removes his hat with the same chivalrous gesture to a coffin and to a creed. People who take the supernatural for granted are less embarrassed in their references to the Creator. "The gods detained me in Egypt," says Homer's Menelaus, "for my hecatombs had not given them full satisfaction and the gods are very strict about their dues." The conception of God as a kind of supernatural tax-collector was crude, but at least it was clear-cut. You know exactly what Menelaus thought about Zeus, but it is very difficult to discover what our Alpine mystics believe about God.

But it is ungracious to criticise a writer such as Mr. Irving, whose delightful *Romance of Mountaineering* has helped so many mountain lovers in these difficult days "to beget the golden time again." It is far better to communicate than to analyse a noble emotion. Frank Smythe somewhere records a conversation, in the course of which he greeted with enthusiastic assent my criticism that he seemed to think that it was more important to feel strongly than to think clearly, and, of course, he was right and I was wrong, for as Thomas à Kempis says, in a different connection, "it is more important to feel compunction than to know the definition thereof."

Frank Smythe, like R. L. G. Irving, has the gift of communicating his own passionate love for the mountains. He is at his best as an interpreter of mountain adventure, but from time to time he achieves a genuinely evocative phrase, as for instance "the crest of Kamet shone like a faintly lit pearl against the waning stars."

A just estimate of British mountain literature must take into account not only its characteristic defects but also the fact that these defects are in the process of correction. The recent attempt to encourage a more rational approach to the problem of Alpine

mysticism should at least provide a basis for discussion. Claud Schuster and Geoffrey Young in his paper on "Mountain Prophets" have inaugurated a more realistic and incomparably more interesting treatment of Alpine history. Moreover, Young has recently been acclaimed by one of the outstanding climbers of Switzerland, Jürg Weiss, as a pioneer of mountaineering psychology and as one of the first to analyse the psychological relations of a climber to his companions on the rope.

Young will be remembered as a pioneer, not only of mountain routes but also of mountain literature. He was the first to interpret in poetry the romance of mountaineering. No mountain poems are quoted more frequently by mountaineers, and none have a surer place in our affections, particularly those in which he expresses what all mountaineers feel in language which all mountaineers can understand. In his best work he says what is worth saying as simply as possible. There is, for instance, an immediate appeal in the moving lines which he wrote after losing his leg in the first World War :

"I have not lost the magic of long days ;
I live them, dream them still.
Still am I master of the starry ways,
And freeman of the hill.
Shattered my glass, ere half the sands had run,
I hold the height, I hold the heights I won."

Young, though he has experimented with various metres and with free verse, is most successful when he submits to the discipline and exploits the resources of regular metre and rhyme. Not so Michael Roberts, whose interesting but difficult poem *St. Gervais* contains a lovely phrase, "the worn shell of air," one of those phrases which dissolve the barrier of distance. The lines which I have quoted from Young appeal to me because I know what they mean, Michael Roberts's mountain poems in spite of the fact that I am by no means always clear what he means.

It is only the greatest of the literary mountaineers whose work can stand comparison with the finest prose and poetry of the mountain lovers such as Dorothy Wordsworth and John Ruskin who did not climb. Never has the distant view of the Alps been described in

nobler poetry than by Tennyson in the quatrain which I have already quoted, or in nobler prose than by Hilaire Belloc in *The Path to Rome*. Seldom has the joy of the journey to the Alps been interpreted with greater felicity than by Addington Symonds.

Matthew Arnold is a link between the Victorians who climbed, and the Victorians who admired mountains from below. He was elected to the Alpine Club in 1859, his qualification being his one and only glacier pass, the easy Théodule, for in those early days little more than evidence of interest in mountaineering was demanded from candidates. Arnold was never a mountaineer, and he resigned the club in '61. It was George Sand who suggested that he should visit Switzerland, and make a special study of de Senancour, the author of *Obermann* and a disciple of Rousseau. *Obermann* spent some years in Switzerland as a recluse before returning to Paris where he made a modest name for himself in the world of letters. Matthew Arnold took George Sand's advice, visited Switzerland and fell in love at Thun with a lady who has never been identified, the Marguerite of his poems. "We know beforehand," Arnold wrote to Clough from Thun, "all they (women) can teach us, yet we are obliged to learn it direct from them."

Two years after parting from "Marguerite," Arnold wrote *Obermann*. The crescendo of feeling in the stanzas beginning—"How often, where the slopes are green" is, as Hugh Kingsmill suggests, probably due to the memory of Marguerite interpenetrating "the vision of the incomparable lake along whose shores Arnold had passed to meet her." It is of Marguerite not of *Obermann* that he is thinking when he writes:—

"I go, fate drives me, but I leave
Half of my life with you."

If I were compiling an anthology for my own use on a desert island, whatever else I omitted I should certainly include *Obermann* and *Obermann Once More*.

"And the domed Velan, with his snows
Behind the upcrowding hills,
Doth all the heavenly opening close
Which the Rhone's murmur fills."

And glorious there, without a sound,
Across the glimmering lake,
High in the Valais-depth profound
I saw the morning break."

All the enchantment of Lake Lemman seems to be crystallised in these exquisite stanzas.

Switzerland is not only "The Playground of Europe," and I will therefore bring this chapter to a close by quoting from a poem describing that other Switzerland which the climber and the tourist seldom sees. Evelyn Amstutz is an Englishwoman who married the famous Swiss mountaineer and skier, Walter Amstutz, and she knows, as few English people know, the little towns haunted by great memories. Murten for instance, or Morat to give Murten its French and more familiar form, near the famous battlefield of that name.

"For Murten is a little town where quiet laughter lies,
Where shopmen deal in simple jokes with everyone who buys
And even all the fat old dogs have twinkles in their eyes.

Half open doors grin broadly at the sunshine in the street :
The dark arcades are laughing with the sound of children's feet
And sweet contentment lingers in the eyes of all you meet.

The streets are very, very wide, and always very bare,
No cars go dashing through them, and the dust lies thickly
there,
And agéd dames, with shrivelled hands, walk out to take the
air."

The first book which I spelt out for myself was Whympers' *Scrambles amongst the Alps*, and at a time when other small boys were reading Henty, I was reading *Peaks, Passes and Glaciers*. Leslie Stephen, Whympers and Mummery, these were the heroes of my boyhood. These and something of the old awe still survives. My attitude may be less uncritical than it was, but it is to my Alpine shelves that I turn in moments of gloom, and it was the Alpine classics which I read and re-read when the barrage of the 1940

blitzes kept me awake. All of which makes none too easy an objective approach to the problems discussed in these chapters. Indeed in my attempt to provide a corrective to my own strong bias, I may have leant over backwards and perhaps been hypercritical. It may well be that I shall please nobody. The crypto-nationalism of my fellow-countrymen may be provoked by that faint hint of iconoclasm in my treatment of established conventions, and the blatant nationalism of such surviving Nazis as may glance through this book in the years to come will certainly not be appeased by my deviations from the traditional English approach to Alpine history.

Those who detest the hysterical nationalism with which mountaineering was infected before the war should be particularly scrupulous to claim no more than our due for the British achievement. Exaggerations merely weakens a strong case, for our contribution to the sport, code and literature of mountaineering has nothing to fear from the most searching and objective examination.

CHAPTER XI

THE ENGLISHMAN IN THE WINTER ALPS

I

ON Boxing day, 1860, the tranquil peace of hibernating Grindelwald was disturbed by the sudden invasion of an English party, led by one of the secretaries at the Berne Legation. The proprietor of the "Bear" was coaxed into opening and warming his hotel for this pioneer party of winter sportsmen. The significant fact about this episode is that these young diplomatists were neither Norwegian, nor Swedes familiar with winter sports from their childhood and who might, therefore, not unreasonably have been expected to do what they could to lighten their exile in Switzerland by demanding that the "Bear" should be opened for a ski-ing and skating party. No, the pioneers were citizens of our beloved country of winter fogs, mist, rain and sleet.

"Alpine winter sports" according to the Locketts (W. G. and Margaret) "were introduced to the world by invalids and their companions. Most of these winter-sport invalids were consumptives, and some of the leading winter-sport pioneers were at one time very ill indeed."

The late Mr. W. G. Lockett was for many years Vice-Consul at Davos, and some chapters in his yet unpublished history of winter sports in Davos and St. Moritz, edited by his daughter, appeared in *The British Ski Year Book* from 1939 to 1942.

The effective discoverer of the curative powers of the Davos winter was a German political refugee named Alexander Spengler. In 1865 he induced two consumptives to spend the winter in Davos, Both recovered, a fact to which the Locketts attribute, "the beginning of the exploitation of the Alpine winter."

"Invalids," write the Locketts, "were among the first sportsmen at Davos" and they held their own so long as the primitive Swiss "coaster" was the only toboggan on the courses, but when the "Americas" came in the invalids were put out of the running because of the heavier weight, and head-foremost position.

A correspondent in *The Davos Courier* (November 8th, 1888), who signed himself "Invalids First," protested against the unsportingness of the healthy tobogganers in using machines which they knew the invalids could not use. "Davos is made for invalids," he

exclaimed, "and tobogganing is made for the invalids. Nearly all the prize-winners have come from among those who were spending the winter here solely for the benefit of their health. . . . I doubt whether any of these invalids is in such health as to use an American toboggan."

The evolution of tobogganing at Davos from a mere mode of transport, among the Swiss, to an organised sport among the British, is a characteristic episode in Anglo-Swiss relations. Wherever the British appear the organisation of sport begins. Clubs and tournaments and championships and codes, written and unwritten, emerge from the vague background of somewhat shapeless activity.

Dame Katharine Furse, daughter of John Addington Symonds, the father of British tobogganing, has described those early Davos winters in her interesting autobiography *Hearts and Pomegranates*.

St. Moritz, like Davos, began as a consumptive resort, and there was a time when St. Moritz appeared to be developing into a more important consumptive resort than Davos itself. In St. Moritz, as in Davos, organised tobogganing began as the result of British initiative. In December, 1876, according to the late Mr. T. A. Cook, there were only twelve visitors in St. Moritz. Franklin Adams, an Englishman who had learned to toboggan in St. Petersburg, made a rough toboggan run on the north side of the Kulm Hotel, about two hundred yards in length. It was not until 1884 that the first Cresta run was partially staked out across the meadows before the snow fell. Mr. Peter Badrutt, proprietor of the Kulm Hotel, superintended operations, with the valued co-operation of three English visitors, George Robertson, Digby Jones and W. H. Bulpett, the founder and first president of the Cresta Club.

The only famous Swiss centres open in winter before the turn of the century were Davos, St. Moritz and Grindelwald. The great development of winter sports began in the early years of the twentieth century.

II

During the World Championship of 1937, which was held at Chamonix, I visited the local museum, and was faintly dismayed to find that Payot, the pioneer of ski-ing in Chamonix, whose portrait hangs in the museum, had made his first experiments in ski-ing only one year before I began my ski-ing career on the slopes near the Savoy Hotel. My *début* was in December, 1898, three years after

E. C. Richardson had learned to ski in Norway, and two years before he first visited Davos.

In 1898 the small group of Englishmen, some six in number, who tumbled about on the "Church-Run Slopes," provoked the derisive comments of the small Chamoniards. Skating was still the Queen of Winter Sports; ski-ing an uncouth intruder. Since then I have watched ski-ing conquer one continent after another, until to-day it counts more adherents than any other world sport. The peculiar character of our contribution to winter sports can only be fully appreciated against the social background of the period. In 1898, when I began to ski, the great Victorian age, with its Augustan quality, was drawing to a close. The Boer War had not yet revealed our weaknesses, and the Diamond Jubilee had reinforced our pride. There was no Mr. Wendell Willkie to insist that the white man's burden was the burden of a guilty conscience, and not, as we liked to believe, the weight of responsibilities nobly undertaken on behalf of backward races. Kipling had warned us that even we might provoke divine retribution for our pride, and we echoed, with unconvincing humility, the refrain of the Recessional—

Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget, lest we forget.

But though we prayed to be delivered from "such boasting as the heathen use" we were, in fact, giving thanks for the contrast between our serene and well-bred pride and the noisy self-praise in which the inferior races indulged. England was still firmly controlled by ruling classes, who had not yet begun to apologise for their existence. Their way of life, governed by strict form, was as much second nature to them as counterpoint was to Bach.

"The profounder the form," writes Spengler, "the stricter and more repellent it is. To the outsider, therefore, it appears as a slavery; the member on the contrary has a perfect and easy command of it. The Prince de Ligne was, no less than Mozart, the master of form and not its slave."

There are recurring periods in history when form "which to the outsider appears as a slavery" becomes irksome, and seems old-fashioned even to the insider, periods of disintegration when the revolt against the exacting demands of form finds expression in a general sloppiness in manners, art and literature. This revolt against form usually begins from above. The breakdown of tradition

in the last decade before the French Revolution was encouraged in aristocratic salons. Wigs were discarded and skirts shortened. "These audacities of dress," writes G. Lenotre in *La Vie à Paris pendant la Révolution*, "bore puerile witness to a general aspiration to liberty. Everybody claimed the right to follow his caprice, and as there was already a general licence to say everything, all that remained for those who wished to prove their independence was to show contempt for the yoke of good manners. People displayed their ingenuity in outbidding each other in impertinence."

Satirists, such as Evelyn Waugh, have described similar tendencies in the social life of England between the world wars, and this disintegration of "form" was mirrored in the winter-sport life of the period. It would, for instance, have been unthinkable for an Englishman not to dress for dinner at any of the leading winter sports centres during the first decade of the century. Such luckless guests as had lost their luggage *en route* slunk about with miserable and apologetic mien. It wasn't their fault that they had to dine in their ordinary clothes. We knew that. Still they were under a cloud, "the tainted wether of the flock." I remember one miserable outcast whose registered luggage did not arrive for a week. Everybody was kind to him, but he lost caste. He was slipping. He knew it. We knew it. The head-waiter knew it. And then the cloud lifted. His luggage arrived. I shall never forget the expression on his face, when he appeared for the first time in evening dress. He looked like a man who has just been cleared by court-martial of a disgraceful charge.

In my first winter at Adelboden there was, I admit, one visitor who made it a point of honour not to dress for dinner. "You don't understand," I heard a friend of his explaining, "he's a member of the Alpine Club. They have to send round their bags by post while they cross glacier passes from one valley to another, so they can't be expected to burden themselves with dress clothes. It isn't that he hasn't *got* dress clothes," he pleaded, "it's a *tradition* of the Alpine Club not to dress for dinner in the Alps."

"But he's not crossing any passes now," replied the sceptic, "and I don't see why a tradition which is sensible enough in summer should be kept up in winter."

"Perhaps you're right," said the loyal friend, "of course if people really *knew* why he didn't dress, it would be all right. I tell as many people as I can," he added, wistfully.

The A.C. man in his brown serge suit was terribly impressive. What risks these heroes ran ! In summer they defied the avalanche and the storm ; in winter the peril of social ostracism. But I never met another member of the A.C. who lived up to the non-dressing tradition. " Of course, if people really *knew*, it would be all right." But people didn't.

That was in 1903. In 1939 the revolt against form had gone so far that hotels which were still fussy about evening dress were finding it necessary to provide dining accommodation for those who could not be bothered to change into ceremonial garments. The English began to show a distaste for evening dress in Alpine hotels when ski-teachers began to dress for dinner.

III

The contrast between the English and Continental schools of skating provides evidence in support of my thesis that sport reflects social tendencies, and I am sure that Mr. Humphrey Cobb, high priest of the Anglican school, would be the first to insist that the decline of English skating is an outstanding example of the flight from form. The English skater keeps his unemployed leg rigidly to his side, and sweeps over the ice in long sweeping curves. Not individual display but combined skating is the ideal of the English school. The leader of a " combined " calls the required edges or turns, and the remaining members of the quartette radiate outwards, or approach each other skilfully, avoiding a collision as they reach " the centre," an orange or other object placed on the ice. It is a pity that four Englishmen skating a " combined " need more space than fifty foreigners waltzing in the degenerate Continental style.

In the days of our Imperial power, nobody dared to question the English skater's demand for *Lebensraum*. The English skated in the English style, and the great rinks at Grindelwald or St. Moritz were seldom troubled by the intrusion of the Continental heresy. But Kipling's England slowly passed away. The " lesser breeds without the law " began to murmur against the English hegemony of the ice rink, and hotel proprietors began to think in terms of square metres per skater, with the result that the English skaters suddenly discovered that they were no longer wanted. English skating vanished from the ice rinks of the Alps, and might have disappeared completely





but for the fact that Morgins offered an asylum to the faithful. Humphrey Cobb, the Moses of Anglican skating, led the chosen people out of the bondage of Egypt to the promised land of Morgins where the law and the prophets were honoured up to the very outbreak of the second world war. And it was at Morgins that the famous skating tests for the "Great Bear" and "Little Bear" badges which had originally been skated for on the rink of the Bear Hotel were continued by the "The Bear Skating Club."

Animus ex animo accenditur might well have been the motto of the Bear Skating Club, for the devotion of the members was kindled by the passionate flame of Cobb's enthusiasm. During a visit to Morgins early in 1924 I conceived the idea of founding a club to promote downhill ski-racing and to produce British skiers who could compete against the best racers of snow-rich countries. If, so I argued, enthusiasm, *esprit de corps* and imagination can keep alive a dying sport, surely the same qualities could accelerate the triumph of a new development of ski-racing. On the sleigh drive down to Trois Torrents, I outlined my plans to my companion Duncan Harvey, and next day the Kandahar Ski Club was born at Mürren.

I acknowledged our debt to the Bears in the *Kandahar Review*, and told the story of the migration of the faithful from Grindelwald to Morgins in a form which might not, perhaps, satisfy the exacting demands of academic historians but which kept as close to the basic facts as most historical novels. Here, for what it is worth, is the story as told in that back issue of the *Kandahar Review*.

IV

The English school of skating is severe, hostile to display and imbued with the team spirit. The Continental school is free, individualistic and spectacular. The English skater tries to perform a difficult turn with as little fuss as possible. To the uninitiated the most difficult of English figures looks easier than the simplest of Continental "threes."

The English skater claims that he is modest, and the Continental skater retorts that of all forms of conceit the English type is the most trying, for it is, in essence, based on the assumption that an Englishman need not do his own trumpeting, since his superiority is too obvious to require vulgar advertisement.

"Combined figure-skating," said the patriarch of the English

M

Opposite : THE BERNESE OBERLAND FROM ABOVE BERN. (*Chiffelle*.)

V

At St. Moritz contemptuous skaters referred to the ski-ing pioneers as "plank-hoppers," and even as late as 1903 skaters were still the aristocrats of winter sports. At Adelboden I used to watch with awe the gods of the ice rink, E. F. Benson, the novelist, Miss Gurney and Dr. Fowler, at one time president of the Ski Club of Great Britain, skating a chaste "combined."

In those days few skiers were specialists. I was one of those who cut the first ski tracks on many of the popular Adelboden runs, but I spent a great deal of time on the ice rink and toboggan runs.

In *Mountain Jubilee* I have tried to describe the contrast between ski-ing at Adelboden in 1902 and modern ski-ing. The social life of winter-sports centres has also changed out of all recognition. There is a freemasonry between pioneers, and an hotel like the "Grand" at Adelboden in 1902 had something of the same atmosphere as the "Monte Rosa" at Zermatt in the 'seventies. Instead of isolating ourselves at small tables we dined together at two long tables, and people did not wait for the formality of an introduction before speaking to each other. Evening amusements were more varied. We danced three or four times a week, and devoted the remaining evenings to indoor gymkhanas and amateur theatricals. The polka and the lancers were just dying out, and it was still considered rather fast to reverse. Young people who had tobogganed together usually addressed each other not as Miss Smith or Mr. Brown but as Miss Mary or Mr. Bobby, which was considered to mark a real advance in intimacy. To dance more than twice with the same partner was faintly compromising.

On Sundays most people went to church. Indeed at Mürren before the first world war it was necessary to have two services every Sunday to accommodate all those who wished to attend Matins. In 1936 when King George V died, a member of the British team asked anxiously whether this meant that they would have to go to church. The change has, perhaps, been one of form rather than substance. Fashion was chief recruiting agent for the pews in the Victorian age, and I doubt if there has been a substantial decrease in the genuinely religious or, for that matter, any real increase in the number of the genuinely disinterested in spite of the fact that fashion, which once filled pews, now compels us to profess a great desire for a more equitable distribution of property. Indeed to judge by the

complaints of hotel-keepers, shop-keepers and club secretaries there would seem to be a marked tendency to anticipate the benevolent action of the State by redistributing such articles of property as can be removed from public places without attracting the attention of their reactionary owners.

VI

Few people can have exercised, directly or indirectly, more influence on the development of winter sports in general and of ski-ing in particular than an ex-Methodist missionary who never attempted to ski.

Mr. E. C. Richardson, in a letter to the *British Ski Year Book*, after referring to the "great services which he rendered to the sport," continued: "Sir Henry was one of the very first to realise that ski-ing was good. And, by way of the many 'centres' in Switzerland which were opened under his auspices before the war, far more people in this country became acquainted with all that ski-ing implies than would otherwise have been the case. Amongst other things, the application of the word 'Kandahar' to ski-ing affairs originated with him. The first race bearing that name was held under his supervision in 1911. And since then in connection with the famous Club of that name, the well-known binding and so on, 'Kandahar' is probably better known to most people, rightly or wrongly, in connection with ski-ing than with the late Lord Roberts of Kandahar, and his victories in India. . . . Not the least of the services which your father rendered to the sport was the fact that he was your father, and that he gave you so free a hand. . . . Sir Henry was a great pioneer of ski-ing."

It would save me some trouble if I could just refer readers to those chapters in *Come What May* and *Mountain Jubilee*, which describe those aspects of my father's career which are relevant to the theme of my book, but I am not so sanguine as to suppose that the readers would promptly buy or borrow these books, and I must therefore summarise briefly what I have already written before, describing those aspects of my father's career which are relevant to my theme.

My father, who was born on July 30th, 1859, was the son of a Lincolnshire tradesman. In his early youth he discovered that he could exchange mice at a profit through the columns of *The Exchange and Mart*. From mice he passed on to poultry, the Brahmapootra

and the game bantam, and thence to the implements necessary for a game which was then known as Sphairistike, and which is now known as lawn tennis. He patented an invention for attaching scoring dials to tennis rackets, an invention which was warmly welcomed by people who had some difficulty in remembering the sequence 15, 30, 40, Deuce, Vantage, Game. The Prince of Wales bought one of these dials and my father promptly informed the world that his business was under Royal patronage.

My father was a queer mixture of merchant adventurer and mystic. He loved making money but was uneasy on the rare occasions when he had a substantial balance in the bank, for he could not resist a sneaking suspicion that Jesus Christ meant what He said in His warnings about wealth. It was this which caused him to sell his share in the business which he had created for a thousand pounds, and to spend his capital in training himself for the career of a medical missionary in India. His health broke down in India, and on his return he founded *The Review of the Churches* to promote Christian reunion, and it was in the columns of this paper that the tourist agency which still bears his name was born. He suggested that a group of divines representing different Churches should meet at Vossevangen in Norway, and "should spend the days in winter sports and the evenings in conference." The ship by which they were to sail was wrecked after they had booked their passage, and a second ship to which the pilgrims were transferred promptly sank to the bottom of the sea. My father accepted the omens, and booked rooms in the Bear Hotel at Grindelwald.

Had either of these ships remained afloat my father might have developed an agency for Norway, and I might have wasted many years trying to convert British skiers to the joys of langlauf and ski-jumping. In that case, of course, my old sparring partner, Alec Keiller, would have felt constrained to invent the slalom.

Twenty-six Reunionists arrived in Grindelwald on January 7th, 1892. The party included representatives of the Church of England, the Methodists, the Baptists, and other communions. I cannot believe that they received a very warm welcome from the old habitués of the winter Bear, for the pioneers of winter sports came from much the same social strata as the Alpine Club, that is from members of the learned professions and, in general, from members of that upper middle class, for whom my brother Hugh has coined the useful portmanteau word "mupples." The Bear habitués spent

their days between tobogganing parties to "The Happy Valley" and the chaste austerities of English skating. They never skied. Sometimes they went further afield, for the Bear habitués included members of the Alpine Club, and the Wetterhorn or Jungfrau was usually climbed once or twice in the course of the winter.

The old Bear, like Monte Rosa at Zermatt or Couttet's at Chamonix, was one of the shrines of the Alpine elect. It was not exactly a club, but those who were not accepted by the habitués felt slightly chilled as they crossed the sacred threshold.

In the early 'nineties there was one point on which all "mupples" were agreed, the social stigma involved in allowing oneself to be "personally conducted" to Switzerland. The Bear Hotel, therefore, lost caste when the Lunn pilgrims arrived, and the mupples had not even the satisfaction of making their displeasure felt for the pilgrims were satisfied with their own society, and it is impossible to freeze out those who are not trying to climb in.

Encouraged by the success of this first experiment my father resolved to summon a formal conference to discuss reunion at Grindelwald. He invited the Prime Minister, the entire bench of bishops, and the leading Free Churchmen to attend a conference at Grindelwald, as his guests. He was thirty-two years of age, and unknown outside of Methodism, and his conviction that he was the proper person to convene a conference to consider reunion argues a certain confidence in not only his mission, but in himself. Mr. Gladstone replied in a courteous letter regretting that "the pressure of political duties," *etc.* One bishop accepted the invitation, as did most of the leading Free Churchmen. My father hoped that the galaxy of divines would attract a sufficient number of paying tourists to save him from bankruptcy.

The great travel agencies all developed out of religious activities. Mr. Thomas Cook began as an organiser of Sunday School excursions in 1841. The Polytechnic developed out of the religious and philanthropic activities of Mr. Quintin Hogg, and Sir Henry Lunn, Ltd., as we have seen, out of Reunion conferences, and even Herr Hitler, the greatest travel agent of all time, could justly claim that his personally conducted tours, *Kraft durch Freude* and the mass migrations which he has organised, developed out of the Nazi faith in a German God.

The nineteenth-century pioneers of "Strength through joy" achieved their results within the accepted framework of Victorian

conventions. Neither Mr. Thomas Cook, nor Mr. Quintin Hogg, nor Sir Henry Lunn, so far as can be ascertained, ever committed a single murder, but new times demand new methods.

The Grindelwald conferences, which were continued for some years, influenced the general reputation of Grindelwald, and not altogether for the good. I remember blushing with shame as I read Mummery's contemptuous reference to Grindelwald as a place given over to prayer meetings and religious conferences. The old Bear, which had so many associations with the golden age of mountaineering, could not survive this melancholy loss of prestige. Just before the first of the summer conferences was due to open, the Bear Hotel, half the village and the chalet in which we were living were burnt to the ground. The new Bear, which will be forever linked with the golden age of winter sports, went up in flames a few months after Hitler had conquered France. The Bear in its successive incarnations was allergic not only to Henry S. Lunn, but also to Hitler. "The Bear," said my brother Hugh, "was too impatient. The Bear should have realised that Henry Lunn's progeny would atone for Henry Lunn's iconoclastic contempt for the Alpine traditions of the Bear. There was too much of the 'Do it now' about the old Bear, too little of the Asquithian 'Wait and see'."

VII

My father was the first tourist agent to discover the possibilities of the winter Alps. He was also quick to realise that it was not enough to proclaim the glories of the Alpine sun in mid-winter or to advertise the joys of winter sports. The kind of clientèle which he hoped to attract had an ingrained prejudice against anything which savoured of the personally conducted tour. The stigma attached to the Lunn tripper had to be exorcised before he could hope to entice the aristocracy from the Riviera and the "mupples" from England. It is, of course, appearances which count, not facts, and the problem was to devise some means whereby people could travel Lunn without appearing to travel Lunn.

My father therefore enlisted the co-operation of a popular Harrow master, Mr. John Stogdon, and offered him a capitation fee if he would sign a letter to Etonians and Harrovians announcing the good news that Dr. Henry S. Lunn had discovered a valley called Adelboden, which was ideal for winter sports. The response was

immediate. The proprietor of the Grand Hotel at Adelboden had opened his hotel with immense misgivings, but the Grand, and another hotel, were filled to overflowing at Christmas, and the numbers booked for the year exceeded four hundred and forty. Before many years had passed Dr. Lunn's firm sent more than five thousand clients to the Alps every winter and had contracts with over thirty hotels.

John Stogdon was one of the most loveable of men. He had been a great traveller, and a pioneer of the Alps, for he was, as I have elsewhere remarked, one of the first to climb systematically without guides. During my schooldays at Harrow I borrowed in succession every volume of *The Alpine Journal* from his library. He often wandered into the library while I was there and talked about mountains. I can see him as I write, with his kindly eyes, his gently ironic smile and his untidy clothes. He had lost so many tobacco pouches that he had ceased to buy them. He kept his tobacco loose in the left hand pocket of his trousers, and every time he filled his pipe, he scattered some tobacco on the floor. This, of course, endeared him to me. Stogdon was a Bohemian who had strayed into the teaching profession. It was not the profession which one would have chosen for him, and yet he was a great success. I doubt if he would have proved a good disciplinarian, had the need arisen to maintain discipline, but the need never arose for no boy could resist his charm. He had a great gift for making school work seem interesting to all save the invincibly ignorant, and though there was nothing overpowering either about his appearance, for he was small of stature, or his manner, for he was unassuming, yet he made a deep and lasting impression on all those who came into contact with him.

One of his sons, a fine cricketer, was a member of the Stock Exchange, and was mercilessly ragged about the circular which John Stogdon signed. In deference to his protests Mr. Stogdon ceased to sign my father's circulars, but their friendship, which was very genuine, was unimpaired, and it was his son, Edgar, now Vicar of Harrow, who committed my father's ashes to the grave.

The success of the "Etonian and Harrovian parties" led to the foundation of the Public Schools Alpine Sports Club, hereinafter referred to as the P.S.A.S.C. The principal object of the Club was to reserve the *exclusive* use of certain hotels for members of the Club. Those who wrote direct to the hotels reserved for the Club were

referred to the head office of *Alpine Sports Ltd.* in London, whereupon they would be provided with the rules of the Club and a proposal form. The principal qualification for the Club was a public school or university education. Certain other clearly defined qualifications were also accepted. The rules were strictly adhered to, and many would-be clients were unable to book rooms during the Club season. The Club owed much of its success to the engaging personality of the first Secretary, Watkin Strang-Watkins. Clients were booked by *Alpine Sports Ltd.*, a limited company which my father founded mainly in order to spare his select winter clientèle the ignominy of "Lunn's tours" labels on their luggage. The problem of travelling Lunn without appearing to travel Lunn had been solved. The success of the Club was immediate and its influence in popularising winter sports was immense. Many of the most famous of Alpine centres such as Mürren, Wengen, Villars, Montana and Lenzerheide were first opened in winter under the auspices of the Club. The complete list of centres which were either first opened by the Club, or in some few cases, popularised by the Club after an unsuccessful attempt to open on their own, were Adelboden, Ballaigues, Beatenberg, Campfer, Celerina, Kandersteg, Klosters, Lenzerheide, Maloja, Montana, Morgins, Mürren, Sils-Maria, Pontresina and Wengen.

The Club's activities were not confined to securing hotels for the exclusive use of its members, for the Club exercised an immense influence on the development of British ski-ing, and for this reason some account of its origin, its rise and its ultimate decline belongs to the history of our sport, and is not out of place in this book. It was under the auspices of the Club that the world's senior challenge cups, for downhill and slalom racing were inaugurated (*Roberts of Kandahar* and *Alpine Ski*). The initiation of the Oxford and Cambridge ice-hockey and ski matches were due to the Club, and the teams were for some years the guests of the Club. The first printed rules for downhill and slalom races, which I drafted in 1922, were first published in the Club Year Book, and were approved by the Club Committee a few weeks before they were submitted to the governing body of British ski-ing.

The Club was a success because it catered for people who liked to preserve their social environment while changing their physical environment. Congenial society consists by definition of members of the same genus, and Englishmen may be divided into those who

enjoy meeting other genera on their travels and those who prefer to associate only with their own particular genus.

My father catered for the latter class, and not only in winter, for he contrived that Free Churchmen should visit lovely Lucerne under the auspices of "The Free Church Touring Guild," and that classical scholars should cruise among the isles of Greece with "The Hellenic Travellers Club." Real travel involves a change not only of physical but also of mental and social climate. Sir Henry Lunn, Ltd., might have been described as a travel agency for the benefit of travellers who did not want to travel.

The P.S.A.S.C. gave formal expression to a principle which, in the 'nineties, had made of hotels such as the Monte Rosa at Zermatt a closed preserve for those who visited Switzerland to climb Swiss mountains by day, and to dine with congenial Englishmen at night. The uncongenial were quietly frozen out of the Monte Rosa and formally excluded by the rules from the P.S.A.S.C. Indeed, Sir Martin Conway, a former President of the Alpine Club, made this point at a dinner of the Public Schools Alpine Sports Club. "In the olden days," he said, "they only went to the Alps in the summer, and one of the great charms was the character of the people by whom they were surrounded and the companionships which they made year by year. But a great change came. The old comradeship of the hotels was rendered impossible, the old habitués were swamped and drowned in the multitude of, he would not call them intruders. . . . But through the agency of the Public Schools Alpine Sports Club the members formed part of an assemblage which seemed to produce the old kind of comradeship which formerly existed in Switzerland."

Part of the success of the P.S.A.S.C. was due to the fact that local committees exercised a certain control with the result that the more turbulent spirits avoided Club centres. The Club acted on the principle that nobody had any grievance if they were kept awake before midnight, but that members had a just grievance if they were woken up in the early hours by the noisily inebriate. In England social extinction was, and perhaps still is, expressed in the statement, "he had to resign from his clubs," and unruly members of the P.S.A.S.C. never failed to respond to the threat of expulsion. The Club committees were therefore far more effective in preserving reasonable amenities than hotel managers, who could merely serve notice of expulsion from the hotel. Hard working winter sportsmen who

enjoyed their sleep appreciated a reasonable measure of disciplinary control, but unfortunately my father insisted on imposing his own ethical standards on the Committee with disastrous results. He was by political conviction a Liberal, by temperament a theocratic dictator, and he forced his resolutions about bars and bunnyhug dances through a Committee which was far too docile. He was not a fanatic teetotaller, for he always offered his guests wine, but he had a horror of hotel bars in which, he believed, the young, and not only the young, were encouraged to drink far more than was good for their health or their pockets. It was very distasteful to him that companies, which he controlled, should make money out of human frailties. He therefore imposed on the Committee a rule closing bars at 11 p.m., and finally abolished the bar both in the Palace, Mürren, and in the Palace, Maloja. He knew nothing about dancing, but suspected there was far too much of the hug in the "bunnyhug" dance, which enjoyed a temporary vogue, and therefore persuaded the Club Committee to pass a resolution condemning the bunnyhug and similar dances. This rule was printed conspicuously on the hotel plans sent out to members, and formed the theme of a satiric poem in *Punch*, which gave great delight to our rivals.

I always maintained that if my father wished to impose his own views about drinks and dancing on his clients, this fact should have been clearly stated in the prospectus of such companies as he floated for purchasing winter sports hotels, but no man accused of exploiting religion in the interests of his pocket, could have reacted more indignantly than my father when accused of exploiting his shareholders in the interests of his religion. "Whether my views," he protested, "about bars and bunnyhug dancing can be justified from the point of view of religion may be a matter of opinion. That they are sound from the standpoint of the business I am convinced. St. Moritz can keep the smart set who like to drink till the small hours of the morning and to bunnybug each other, but the restrictions of which you complain will attract a far more stable and valuable clientèle to our hotels."

He was wrong, for the flight from form had begun, and the England of the 'twenties was very different from the England in which the Club had been founded. The very name, with its emphasis on the public schools, though an asset in the early days of the Club, was a liability when our rivals began to assert that adults

were disciplined like public schoolboys at Club hotels. Moreover in the years which had passed since the foundation of the Club, the public schools were losing their serene self-confidence. "Some of you," said a preacher in the Eton pulpit, "will occupy great positions in Church and State. Some of you will lead our armies in the field. Some of you will adorn the judicial bench, and some of you will be only engineers." That note was seldom heard after the first World War, for the journey to Canossa had begun, though none of us could have foreseen the suppliant note which great headmasters feel compelled to adopt to-day.

When I was a boy the "old school tie" was still a sacred theme, and when I showed the typescript of *The Harrovians* to a wise critic, he told me that I was not only risking social ostracism for myself, but grave damage to my father's business. "You must see," he said, "that it is rather anomalous to criticise the public school tradition when your family business depends so largely on exploiting the public school *esprit de corps*." "That's all very well," I replied, "but my father divides his energies between trying to drive hereditary peers out of political life, and trying to entice them to Mürren. He has never allowed business considerations to interfere with the expression of his views, so I am merely living up to the family tradition."

My book was not intended as an attack either on Harrow, of which I am a loyal son, or on the public school tradition, and though I am flattered to be described by Mr. Edward Shanks, the distinguished critic, as "an innovator of importance, and all the others including Mr. Alec Waugh with his *Loom of Youth* but followers. I believe his influence on our public schools to have been of deep and lasting importance," I should be sorry to be held responsible for the diffident note which has replaced the old robust confidence in the system, and prefer to ascribe this failure of nerve to the popular song, *The Old School Tie*, which, perhaps, bears much the same relation to the social revolution through which we are living as Beaumarchais' *Mariage de Figaro* to the French Revolution.

The Club, which might have survived these changes in fashion was killed by the financial crisis of 1931. The Chancellor of the Exchequer urged Englishmen to stay at home in order to save the pound. The consequent collapse of the winter sport traffic between Great Britain and Switzerland not only killed the Club, but also resulted in a transference of my father's firm to other proprietors.

Club hotels with their exclusively British clientèle were, of course,

severely hit, and their proprietors profited from this bitter lesson. Never again would they place themselves in the position of depending solely on a British clientèle. I have often wondered why Swiss public opinion ever tolerated a state of affairs under which Swiss citizens were excluded from many of the best hotels in the most popular winter resorts unless they were members of a British club. A Swiss university graduate was, of course, eligible under our rules, but the practical effect of the Club system was to restrict Club hotels to a British clientèle.

I remember a patriotic Swiss, Werner Salvisberg, expatiating on the iniquity of this arrangement to an amused group of Englishmen at the Palace Hotel. The Anglo-Swiss University ski race had just been run, and Salvisberg, who had raced with distinction for the Swiss universities, had overheard a stormy altercation between a Swiss, who wished to book a room for the night, and the hotel clerk, who informed him that all accommodation was exclusively reserved for a British club. The argument was conducted in the Swiss-German dialect, but Salvisberg provided a vigorous and idiomatic rendering for our benefit. "The Swiss was very angry, and he say to the *Chef de Reception*, 'You bloody boy, here I stand on Swiss bottom and cannot get a bed.'"

Another oft-quoted remark about the Club was made by King Albert of the Belgians. He had booked the annexe to the Kurhaus (a non-P.S.A.S.C. hotel), but he spent his evenings at the Palace. "I would like," he said to me, "my daughter to dance at the Palace, but perhaps it is against the rules. You see she was not educated at an English public school."

My father had travelled widely, but had never made the slightest attempt to master any foreign language. He was always happy in America because Americans spoke English, and he had a real affection for many of the Swiss, but he had no interest in foreigners as such, and looked forward to a distant Utopia when all foreign nations would learn to speak English and accept the guidance of English Liberals in their political developments. Meanwhile he realised that this Utopia was far distant, and that foreigners were not only un-English but sadly undependable. I remember his comment after signing a contract in a certain Latin country. "These foreigners will sign anything, but their signature isn't worth the paper it's written on." Yet he had a profound faith in the value of international agreements, as an insurance against war, agreements

signed by foreigners "whose signature isn't worth the paper it's written on." His political and his private views were in sharp contrast. Thus, he was knighted by the King and decorated by the Kaiser for promoting Anglo-German friendship, but the Club which he founded owed its success to the implicit guarantee that its members would be protected against the risk of meeting Germans in Swiss hotels. In the preliminary advertisement of Mürren, just before it was opened in winter, he wrote, "Mürren has always been a favourite with English visitors, and has never been invaded by our Teutonic cousins in summer." Note the word "invasion," and the suggestion that a displeasing flavour of some such summer invasion would linger on into the winter months, however carefully "our Teutonic cousins" might be excluded from Club hotels.

My father was not only the founder of a Travel Agency, but also a much travelled man, and yet he never felt the need to master enough French or German to ask his way to the station. He was a great Liberal Internationalist with a profound contempt for all foreigners. I was never an internationalist, and liked foreigners all the better for being different. My father worked for Anglo-German friendship not because he liked Germans but because he disliked war. I had no faith in his peace panaceas but a real affection for the old Germany. I was brought up on "Max und Moritz," the *Lorelei*, and the Black Forest legends, and a pocket edition of Goethe's *Faust* lived in my rucksack and accompanied me on all my climbs.

Anglo-German tension rose sharply in the years before the first world war, and I remember a furious telegram from the Club Committee at Lenzerheide provoked by the fact that the proprietor of the hotel had actually dared to let two bedrooms to Germans during the Club season. My father was forced to make a special journey to Lenzerheide to placate the indignant members. Club hotels were British *Lebensraum*. In the post-war period meetings like the International University Ski Championship and the Arlberg-Kandahar helped to build a bridge between our skiers and the skiers from the Black Forest, Bavaria and Austria.

My father never seems to have worried about the glaring inconsistency between his personal and his business attitude to "our Teutonic cousins," but as a Radical with advanced views he was anxious to defend himself against the charge of exploiting in business those class barriers, which he denounced with such vehemence from political platforms. "When I started my business career," he said,

"I tried to mix people, and I soon found that people like to travel with like-minded companions, Free Churchmen with Free Churchmen, public school men with public school men, dons with the Hellenic Travellers Club." This was the truth, but it was not the whole truth. Life is a game, and the fun of all games consists in the invention of problems for the fun of solving them. The social stigma once attached to travelling with "Lunn's" represented a problem, the solution of which called for inventive talent, imagination and ingenuity, and my father extracted an immense amount of fun out of the dramatic transvaluation of values represented by the fact that *The Tatler* devoted three more pages to social celebrities at Mürren than to their opposite numbers at St. Moritz. It was a kind of poker, in which one opened a Jack-pot with two peers. Moreover, though there was no place for tradition in his political ideology, he himself had a romantic feeling for the past, as was very evident during the period of his life when he was trying to start an institution for the starvation cure. He had been greatly impressed by the beneficial effects of starvation in his own case, and even more impressed by the high fees which were charged in an existing institution for curing people by giving them nothing to eat. He had not made a financial success out of the Swiss hotels which he had bought, and he was enchanted by the possibility of charging people far more for eating nothing than he had ever dared to charge them for full table d'hôte, including afternoon tea. For some obscure reason, which he never explained, he had persuaded himself that the proper setting for a starvation cure was a baronial hall, and he spent many weeks inspecting stately homes, which their noble owners could no longer afford to maintain. He used to talk with great animation of the historical associations of these castles, but became vague and *distract* when I pressed him for a little more precise information as to their commercial possibilities.

He certainly had a feeling for the romance of an old castle or an old family, but was never in the least overawed by such celebrities as visited Mürren. I remember so well the look of pained surprise on his face when some distinguished person, whom he had lured on to the Club Committee, ventured to oppose his theocratic views.

Many men who have begun life as Methodists and Radicals have ended as Conservatives and Anglicans, but my father never made the slightest attempt to adjust his beliefs or his habits to the views of his clients. He remained a Methodist lay preacher and a Liberal to the

end of his days. He nearly ruined the business by his impassioned attack on the Boer War, and he stood for Parliament as a Liberal at a time when it was almost as unfashionable to be a Liberal as it is to be a Conservative to-day. When the news of his defeat was announced in one of the Club hotels, his clients applauded enthusiastically. Like all good Liberals he had the makings of a dictator, and he must have been one of the very few people who ever prevented Mrs. Asquith doing something on which she had set her heart. She was a frequent visitor to Mürren, and I remember once intruding into a room where my father and Mrs. Asquith seemed to be engaged in a vivacious argument. At that time Mrs. Asquith was very interested in classical dancing, and had offered to perform a *pas seul* in the Palace ballroom. My father insisted that this was quite inconsistent with the dignity of her position as the wife of the Premier. He warned her that a *pas seul* in the best classical manner would be represented as a cabaret turn by her enemies and might have a disastrous effect on the fortunes of the Liberal party. Mrs. Asquith, he explained, was already a bit of a trial to the Nonconformists whose support was so important to the Liberal party, "Mrs. Asquith was very nettled," said my father, "she told me that she had successfully defied convention all her life, and that nobody had ever prevented her doing what she had set her heart on doing." "Perhaps not, in England," my father replied, "but I'm Prime Minister of Mürren."

My father had a great admiration for Mrs. Asquith and the fact that they were both nonconformists in the social sense was perhaps a common bond. He often quoted with delight her brilliant retort to E. F. Benson, the novelist, who had published a cruel caricature of that warmhearted lady in his best-selling novel *Dodo*. She cut short his embarrassed apologies, when they met shortly after the publication of this book, and said, "But surely nobody could imagine that I am the heroine of your book. You see, Mr. Benson, I'm not beautiful and I don't hunt in June." Benson was not the sort of person who would enjoy being convicted of a social solecism, such as misplacing the hunting season.

My father was at his best as the patriarch of the Hellenic Travellers Club cruises. Whereas he got a great deal of fun out of exploiting the social hierarchy, which he did not take very seriously, he had a profound belief in the value of a classical education and a great reverence for learning and learned men. None the less he could

hold his own with the dons, for he had a scholar's knowledge of New Testament Greek, and a gift for making the best possible use of such knowledge as he possessed. Once when two classical dons were puzzling over a newspaper in modern Greek, my father took the paper from them, and translated the leading article for their benefit. They were much impressed, perhaps because they could not tell whether his translation was accurate. Nor could he.

I have enjoyed re-reading the old numbers of the *Public Schools Alpine Sports Club Year Book*, which can be consulted in our Club Library. The speeches made at Club dinners before the first World War have the charm of period pieces, a period more remote in everything but time from these troublous days than the period of the Napoleonic wars. The Club is dead, and never again will Mürren be "extra-territorial," but in its day the Club rendered great services to British ski-ing, and few men have done more to tempt Englishmen to the Alps than its founder. He had a genuine interest in the development of ski-ing, and supported all my projects with great enthusiasm, mainly, I admit, because they were my projects. He was, for instance, in some sense the founder of the Alpine Ski Club, for though the idea of the Club originated with me, I was only an undergraduate at the time, and without his help the Club would never have been born. It was he who persuaded Sir Martin Conway to become the first President, and Dr. Savage, a former Vice-President of the Alpine Club to become the first Vice-President, and it was he who acted as a host to some twenty foundation members at the foundation lunch. He would have liked to join the Club as a foundation member, but he had never skied or climbed, and his name among the list of our members would not only have cast doubts on our intention to impose a stiff ski-mountaineering qualification but would also have provoked the criticism of the old guard of skiers who, at that time, regarded all his activities with suspicion.

The fact that I dissuaded him from joining was one of his minor semi-flippant semi-serious grievances, and when the Club entertained him to their Silver Jubilee dinner he mentioned the fact that his son had blackballed him for the Club which he had helped to found. I have tried in this chapter to make amends to him for this, and to do justice to one whom E. C. Richardson describes with justice as a "great pioneer of ski-ing," the only pioneer of ski-ing who never skied.

CHAPTER XII

BRITISH SKI-ING AND SKI-MOUNTAINEERING

I

THE first mention of ski-ing in Central Europe occurs in the work of Valvasor, an Austrian, who published in 1689 a book about Krain in Carniola, an Austrian province near the Adriatic. The peasants of Krain were expert ski-runners who had mastered the technique of continuous turns on steep slopes. "No mountain is too steep," wrote Valvasor, "or too overgrown with big trees to prevent them ski-ing down it; they wind and twist about like a snake." How is it that ski-ing did not spread from Carniola through the Alps? When I began to ski in 1898 ski-ing was the sport of a few eccentrics. Since 1898 ski-ing has spread like a prairie fire through Central Europe, conquering country after country and continent after continent. Why was this triumph delayed until the twentieth century?

Ski-ing in Scandinavia dates back to prehistoric times, and from the beginnings of recorded history Norwegians and Swedes must have found themselves in Alpine regions during the winter months, and many a Swiss, Austrian, Bavarian, North Italian or Savoyard, as the case may be, must have spent a winter in Scandinavia. Yet during all the centuries no visitor from Central Europe returned to the Alps as a missionary for ski-ing, and it was not until 1883 that a passing Norwegian presented the monks of St. Bernard with a pair of ski, and it was not until 1889 that the first expert Norwegian ski-runner appeared in Switzerland and introduced ski-ing into Winterthur. The fact that ski-ing could remain restricted for century after century to Scandinavia and isolated pockets in Central Europe, such as Krain in Carniola, is one of the unsolved problems of history.

In my book, *A History of Ski-ing*, I have shown that in strict order of chronological precedence Austria was the first and Great Britain, strangely enough, the second European country in which ski were used outside of Scandinavia. Ski were probably used in Devonshire 300 years ago, and in the early forties of the nineteenth century ski were in regular use among the Cumberland miners.

The English were among the first to introduce ski-ing into

Switzerland. In 1888, a year before the Norwegian, O. Kjelsberg introduced ski to Winterthur, Colonel Napier brought a pair of ski to Davos, and Katharine Symonds (now Dame Katharine Furse) made a few experiments with them. In 1890, according to Herr Adolf Odermatt of Engelberg, "Mr. Knocker, an Englishman, came from Scandinavia, and brought three pairs of ski with him. He settled down in Meiringen as a farmer and introduced ski-ing there. After this several from Meiringen sent for ski to Norway."

In 1891 Gerald Fox introduced ski-ing to Grindelwald. On March 24th, 1894, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, guided by the brothers Branger of Davos, crossed the Mayenfelder Furka from Davos to Arosa, this being the first full day's tour on ski by an Englishman, little more than a year after the first real ski expedition in the Alps, the crossing of the Prigel Pass (1,554 m.) between Glarus and the Muotatal by a Swiss party led by Christoph Iselin. In the closing years of the century, Canon Savage, the Bostock brothers, and the two Misses Owen made some fine ski expeditions at Grindelwald, notably the Faulhorn and Schwarzhorn.

It was not until the winter of 1901-1902 that the brothers Richardson first visited Davos—they had learned to ski in Norway in the winter of 1895-1896—but E. C. Richardson is, by common consent, the father of British ski-ing. He was not only the founder of the Ski Club of Great Britain (1903) but is also regarded by the Swiss as a pioneer of ski-ing in Switzerland. It is an exaggeration to write, as Herr Odermatt writes, that "the Richardsons introduced ski-ing into Switzerland" but Herr Odermatt is justified in his statement that they "made it popular, especially at Davos."

"The boys of Davos," writes E. C. Richardson, "used to come out and watch us practising on the Church Slopes. From this they derived great entertainment, but it was a long time before it seemed to occur to them that they might try a hand at the game themselves. This, no doubt, was partly due to lack of ski. Eventually, however, some of them (and these are now the cracks—or were just before the war) got ski or barrel staves or something, and joined in for the fun. We taught them the elements of running and jumping, got up competitions, and so on."

It is interesting to note that though the Norwegians introduced ski-ing to Switzerland, it was an Englishman who was, perhaps, the first to explore the remoter Norwegian ranges on ski. In a letter to the *Winter Sports Review*, 1911-1912, Cecil Slingsby, father-in-law

of Geoffrey Young, writes : " Though I have never yet joined the Winter Sports in Switzerland yet, strange to say, I advocated so long ago as the year 1880, in *Den Norske Turist Forenings Aarbog* for 1880 to the Norwegians themselves the sport of ski-running over their wildest mountain country, which I had myself, to a small extent, practised in 1880." And in a subsequent letter Cecil Slingsby describes his ski traverse of the Keiser and Morke Koldedal passes, and adds : " My mountaineering friends in Norway are good enough to say that my suggestion on page 107 of the *Nor. Tur. For. Aarbog* for 1880 was the earliest known recommendation to mountain lovers to take a run on ski over the wildest mountain region in their country."

II

Among the original members of the Ski Club of Great Britain there were no mountaineers as that term is understood by members of the Alpine Club. J. H. Fulton and F. Hedges Butler explored the remoter regions of Lapland and Norway on ski ; Archer Thomson led a Club tour to Montenegro and introduced the first ski seen in Montenegro and Turkey. The Club also organised club tours to Sweden, Norway and Tirol, but neither the Ski Club of Great Britain nor the Alpine Club played any part in the exploration of the High Alps on ski. The first party to invade the High Alps on ski was led by the German, W. Paulcke. Five German members of the Schwarzwald Ski Club crossed the Bernese Oberland from Meiringen to Belalp and Brig during January, 1897, climbing the Jungfrau *en route*. In Switzerland the exploration of the High Alps on ski was mainly the work of Swiss, notably Marcel Kurz, some of the finest of the earliest expeditions being those of Henry Hoek, once a German, now a naturalised Swiss. In Italy, Count Aldo Bonacossa was the outstanding ski-mountaineer of the pioneer phase ; in Austria, Colonel Bilgeri ; and in France, Pierre Dalloz, Armand Delilem, De Gennes, and other members of that magnificent club, the " G.H.M."

The Alpine Club had played a prominent part in the development of winter mountaineering *on foot*. Coolidge, an American member, made the first winter ascents of the Jungfrau, Schreckhorn and Wetterhorn. The first winter ascents of the Gross Glockner and Bernina were made respectively by M. A. Baillie-Grohman and the

Rev. C. E. B. Watson, and no European amateur had a longer list of winter ascents on foot to his credit than Colonel E. L. Strutt. Miss Stratton made the first winter ascent of Mont Blanc, and Mrs. Aubrey le Blond climbed more peaks in winter than many members of the Alpine Club had climbed in summer ; her amazing record including the first winter ascents of Piz Palù, Piz Sella, Piz Zupo, and the Disgrazia.

It was not, however, till the Alpine Ski Club was founded on March 7th, 1908, that British skiers began to explore the High Alps. In the same month Scott Lindsay reached the Furgrat and Adler passes on ski ; perhaps the first ski raid into the High Alps by an Englishman, for R. Bracken, who climbed the Blümlisalp *circa* 1907 on ski is a little doubtful of the date. In January, 1908, the present writer invited Professor F. Roget to accompany him on an end-to-end traverse of the Oberland glaciers from Kandersteg to Meiringen, in the course of which they and their guides crossed the Petersgrat, Lötschenlücke, Oberaarjoch, and climbed the Finsteraarhorn.

Two members of the Alpine and the Alpine Ski Clubs, Bernard Head and Laurence Earl, introduced ski-ing to New Zealand and skied on the Tasman Glacier, and A.S.C. members, such as W. A. Moore, Charles Hordern, and A. D. Parkin attacked some of the great peaks on ski, but for the most part our skiers confined themselves to the lesser heights, and our summer mountaineers to the mountains in summer.

The Alpine Ski Club has, however, the distinction of having published the first ski guide in any language to any part of the Swiss Alps : *The Alpine Ski Guide to the Bernese Oberland* by the present writer.

III

The essence of mountaineering as a sport consists, as we have seen, in the invention of an artificial problem for the fun of solving it. Fortunately, the conquest of a great peak is as barren in material benefits as the attainment of the North Pole. The sporting interest of a winter ascent is due to the new conditions which winter creates, conditions which, in effect, create a new problem, but the problem of a first ski ascent is far more interesting than that of a first winter ascent on foot. The foot-climber usually follows the summer

route, and the conditions on the summit ridges are often much the same in winter as in summer. The rocks may be almost as dry and as warm, and an ice ridge in the late summer may be a snow ridge in the late winter, but the conditions of the problem are often radically altered for the skier. Ski-ing enlarges the range of mountain emotions, and enriches the mountain joys by the joy of speed. The ski-mountaineer must plan his tour, not only to ensure the conquest of his peak, but also to ensure the maximum of pleasure on the descent. The intellectual pleasure of planning a first ski ascent is never greater than in late spring, when the difference not only between perfect ski-ing and the reverse but also between a safe and a dangerous descent often depends on exact timing in relation to the orientation of route.

The obvious glacier passes were, of course, the first to be crossed on ski, but some of my pleasantest ski runs have rewarded my search for novelty. Passes and traverses, such as the traverse of the Trifthorn or the traverse from the Weisshorn hut to the Turtmantal by the Biesjoch, or various ski passes from the Oberland glaciers to the Rhone Valley, were overlooked by my predecessors either because their ski-ing possibilities were unsuspected or because they involved transporting ski up or down a few hundred feet of rock ridge or ice slopes. It is surely more amusing to discover some elusive ski pass than to foot-slog up a peak in winter by a route already followed scores of times in summer. It is no more and no less rational to derive pleasure from cutting the first ski track on glacier snows than from treading where man has never trod before. Had not the Dom (14,873 ft.) been the highest mountain wholly in Switzerland, I should have left my ski on the little saddle just below the top, for the last slope was uncomfortably steep, but I feel no more need to defend my ambition to point my ski downhill from the actual crest of the highest snow slope in Switzerland than a mountaineer to rationalise his desire to conquer a virgin peak. My difficulty is not to explain why I enjoyed pioneer work on ski, but to account for the fact that the lure of unexplored snows should have meant so little to British skiers, the overwhelming majority of whom were content to repeat the classic ski tours in the Oberland, Silvretta and other ranges. Hofmeier in his history of winter mountaineering, chronicles the more important of the pioneer ski tours, and, unless my memory has played me false, my name is the only British name to appear in his list. In other ranges our record

has been more impressive. In 1930 Frank Smythe took his ski with him on an expedition to Kangchenjunga and enjoyed a descent of 6,000 feet to the Base camp. In 1931 Frank Smythe led the successful attack on Kamet, in the course of which R. L. Holdsworth established a height record for ski-ing (23,500 ft.). In 1934 Sir Norman Watson and Wing-Commander E. B. Beauman crossed the Coast Range in British Columbia, a magnificent achievement in pioneer ski-ing.

IV

Modern snowcraft owes everything to the skiers, for snowcraft was a rudimentary science until men began to ski. The categories into which the foot-climber divides snow are few in number and easy to recognise. The foot-climber needs only to know whether snow is hard enough to bear his weight, or, if soft, safe or dangerous. The skier on the other hand must learn to recognise some twenty clearly defined and named varieties of snow, each of which involves a corresponding variation in technique. The foot-climber can delegate snowcraft to the guides, but the skier must solve his own problems *ambulando*.

Unlike the foot-climber whose decisions are deliberate, the skier must diagnose his snow surfaces while descending at speed. He must learn to recognise and instinctively to allow for changes of texture and speed of snow, according to the orientation and steepness of the slope. In February, for instance, he may pass from fast powder to breakable crust as the gradient steepens on a southerly slope. Unless he is prepared for these changes he will fall.

The disinterested search for knowledge is no more common among mountaineers and skiers than among other people. The mountaineer masters the knowledge which is necessary to climb with safety and with success. He does not burden his mind with more snowcraft than is essential for his purpose, and it is because the skier needs to know infinitely more about snow than the mountaineer that modern snowcraft is the work of skiers. It is, for instance, far easier to predict the fall of avalanches in summer than in winter or spring. In summer mountaineering begins when the climber crosses the snowline or leaves the bridle path for the rocks, but in winter the Schilthorn can kill like Mont Blanc in summer. Unless the skier confines himself to "standard courses" he is forced

to study avalanche craft, for untracked snow on steep slopes is always potentially dangerous. Most skiers dispense with guides on the mountains such as Schilthorn or Faulhorn, and consequently most skiers are obliged to acquire at least an elementary knowledge of avalanche craft. The danger point for avalanches begins with a gradient of 30 degrees, and the British ski tests, parts of which have to be carried out on slopes of 30 degrees, have helped British skiers to judge gradients correctly. No skier, for instance, could write as a distinguished modern mountaineer writes of a leader who "kicked his way round a considerably steeper slope of snow which appeared to have an angle of 80 degrees." I have never seen in all my experience snow lying at a steeper angle than 50 degrees, excepting in the case of short banks just below a cornice.

Even the greatest of guides in the days before mountaineers began to ski made blunders in the diagnosis of snow which a ski-ing tyro would not commit. The standard of snowcraft in the seventies may be illustrated by the adventures of Coolidge in the course of his winter climbs. On January 20th, 1874, Coolidge and Christian Almer, one of the greatest of Alpine guides of that period, left Grindelwald for the Bergli hut and followed the ordinary path to the Bäregg. A modern skier would recognise in the path to the Bäregg a perfect textbook example of an avalanche trap. The path climbs below a succession of steep vertical terraces, and crosses steep slopes suspended above vertical cliffs below. Coolidge and Almer just missed being overwhelmed by an avalanche below the Bäregg, and by another avalanche just above the Bäregg. A few years later Coolidge was actually caught in an avalanche on the same path between the Bäregg and Bänisegg. He "luckily escaped with the loss of an ice-axe and a pair of spectacles." After these three escapes the route to the Bäregg was abandoned by Almer in favour of the obvious route on the true left-hand side of the glacier, the route which a skier would instinctively choose. There are conditions when both routes are dangerous. There are no conditions on which the latter route is dangerous and the Bäregg route safe. Three avalanches on two short expeditions is rather a high allowance for a guide who was accepted by the Alpine Club as a supreme master of snowcraft.

The reaction of the Alpine Club in years past to my claim that skiers had made a contribution of great value to mountaineering was much the same as that which one might expect from the Vatican,

if it could be proved that Dr. Buchman had made important discoveries in theology, but the paradoxes of one age are often the truisms of the next, and the great mountaineer with whom I crossed swords many years ago on this issue, paid a generous tribute to the present writer's contribution to snowcraft in his valedictory Presidential address.

Though we have no reason to be particularly proud of our record as pioneers so far as ski-mountaineering is concerned, we may claim even in this branch of mountaineering to have contributed something to the general stock of knowledge. "It is a curious fact," wrote the greatest of ski-mountaineers, Marcel Kurz, "that the English who were the first to explore our Alps and the last to explore them on ski possess, since 1921, the best work on this subject." The book in question, *Alpine Ski-ing*, was described by the Swiss Ski Year Book as "one of the first and certainly one of the best and most thorough summary of those facts which the Alpine ski-runner must master," and the present writer was acknowledged by the Austrian Alpine Journal as "without doubt the leading expert on this subject." An earlier version of this book was translated into German, and a later version into French.

And at this point I may invite the reader's sympathy for the dilemma of a historian who is dealing with a chapter of mountain history in which the historian has played a minor role. In my book, *A History of Ski-ing*, I solved this problem by referring to myself as "an Englishman" and to my book as "a work by an Englishman." I was rebuked by one reviewer for mock modesty, and as I do not seem to have mastered the technique of breathing down my trumpet, I may as well confess, unashamedly, that I am proud of that little book, *Alpine Ski-ing*, which I believe to have been the first systematic attempt to deal with the problems of snowcraft "at all heights and seasons."

In recent years Gerald Seligman, a former president of the Ski Club of Great Britain, has brought to the study of snow the training and the methods of a scientist. He lived for months at the Jungfrau-joch where he carried out his researches in the structure of ice and snow. Seligman is the Tyndall of our day, and his classic book, *Snow Structure and Ski Fields*, has no rival in any other language.

CHAPTER XIII

"DOWNHILL ONLY"

I

A GREAT mountaineer had accepted, without enthusiasm, an invitation to describe some of his Alpine experiences for the benefit of a literary society in a Cathedral town. The Dean who took the chair was no climber, and he listened with growing perplexity to an address which was more like a sermon than a lecture. It seemed that this mountaineering (which the Dean had believed to be a sport) was, in fact, a channel of grace, the neglect of which might involve spiritual damnation. "I felt," said the Dean, "as if I were listening to a Revivalist preaching on the text 'Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.'"

Now it should be possible to maintain that mountaineering is the noblest of sports without trespassing on clerical territory. I am, for instance, sure that the Dean could not possibly take exception to Irving's *Confessio fidei*, "It is my one regret for being just an ordinary man that I bring so little credit to the mountains that have done so much for me. Only one man knows the creature I should have been without them." Irving, be it noted, only claims that he is a better man than he would have been had he never climbed, not that he is a better man than those who do not climb, but it is this claim which seems to be implied in many of the attacks on skiers.

The logic of facts soon converted the Alpine Club to the value of ski as an aid to mountaineering, but the prejudice of the elect against skiers was inflamed by the fact that a famous racing club described itself by the provocative name of "The Downhill Only Club." In the course of 1930 a great mountaineer wrote me a succession of indignant letters on the iniquity of ski-racing. "You must realise," he wrote, "that there is a growing section of men who loathe and detest racing and pot-hunting, to whom mountains are things to be revered and not treated as slides." An unconscious echo, perhaps, of Ruskin's "The Alps themselves which your own poets used to love so reverently, you look upon as soaped poles in a bear garden, which you set yourselves to climb and slide down again with 'shrieks of delight.'" The soaped pole

becomes the soaped plane ; the skier replaces the mountaineer in the dock on the same charge of desecrating the cathedrals of nature. R. L. G. Irving is even more contemptuous. " Fashionable winter sports are like jazz music, an instance of return to the primitive delights practised by savages," a statement which he justified by comparing ski-ing, subtlest and most æsthetic form of swift motion known to man, to " the tobogganing of savages down steep slopes." Whereas mountains reminded Ruskin of cathedrals, cathedrals, Irving tells us, remind him of mountains, and it is perhaps this mountain-cathedral association which is responsible for these recurring lay sermons on the iniquity of ski-racing.

Ski-ing it would seem is only to be tolerated on the assumption that its *raison d'être* is to climb mountains in winter or in spring. But among the mountains, as mountaineers are the first to insist, ski are merely a means to an end, an end which demands the subordination of speed to security. To define as the final end of an activity that aspect of it in which the activity is a means to an end is illogical. The final end of mountaineering is mountain conquest. The final end of ski-ing is speed, and it is in ski-racing that ski-ing finds its most logical if not its most attractive expression.

The development of ski-racing was unaffected by the *odium Alpinum*, for the Downhill-only enthusiasts were serenely indifferent to Alpine jeremiads. It is difficult to deal with heretics who have never even heard of the Vatican. " What do you think," a distinguished member of the Alpine Club remarked to me at a Ski Club Dinner, " I've just been asked if the Alpine Club is affiliated to the Swiss Alpine Club ! " When the Oxford and Cambridge ski teams arrived at Breuil, where the annual Varsity race was being held, they passed underneath a triumphal arch inscribed " Welcome to the compatriots of Whympers." " Who the devil is Whympers ? " they asked. The title of a famous paper " Without are dogs " in *The Alpine Journal* correctly represented, as A. W. Andrews remarks, " the attitude of the great to anybody outside the charmed circle." But it is not easy to cope with a dog who has not realised that he is " without." A friend of mine, a poor performer on ski but a well known mountaineer, once visited me at Mürren, and was very caustic about pot-hunters. The Mürren skiers knew of his mountaineering fame, and they extended

to him the respect which is due to a master of his craft, but when I quoted some of his caustic remarks about pot-hunting somebody remarked that they had seen him on ski, and the subject was dropped, for so far as ski-ing was concerned they were only interested in the judgment of their peers. It may well be that skiers would have given less offence had they been readier to take offence.

It was only in England that ski-racers provoked the *odium Alpinum*. Many of the greatest of Alpine guides were equally famous as ski-racers, "Matterhorn" Furrer, for instance, or Herman Steuri. Again amateurs such as Richardet, Walter Amstutz, Pierre von Schumacher and Ernst Feuz, who played so great a role in the conquest of the last of the famous virgin ridges and faces in the Alps, were no less active as racers and as the organisers of racing. And even in England the attack on ski-racing was only a passing phase. "We cannot," writes Geoffrey Young, "be wholly devoted to one enthusiasm without learning something about the nature of all enthusiasms, and without in the end grounding at least a respect for all objects and pursuits, however originally sympathetic to us, which arouse a like devotion in others." Young's dictum was exemplified in the friendly references to ski-racing by great mountaineers such as Captain J. P. Farrar who as Editor of *The Alpine Journal* paid a generous tribute not only to *The British Ski Year Book* but also to "those qualities of determination, quick decision and courage" which ski-racing demands, and Farrar's lead was followed by two of his successors in the presidential chair, L. S. Amery and Claud Schuster, both of whom had previously held office as Presidents of the Ski Club of Great Britain. Schuster and Amery, by practice and by precept, for their apologetics were based on practical experience as ski-mountaineers, broke down the last surviving prejudices not only against ski-mountaineering, but also against ski-racing. In a paper read before the Alpine Club in 1934 Claud Schuster said: "There is a further matter on which the mountaineer sometimes assumes a superiority over the skier. He objects that what should be a pure sport is turned into a series of competitions, and that the skier's mind is occupied entirely in winning races—as the mountaineer would say, in mere pot-hunting. It has always seemed to me that there is a certain touch of Pecksniff in this attitude. In the first place, competition, however much we may deprecate the idea, has in the past entered

into mountaineering, and even enters into it to-day. There are those who set themselves against their fellows to accomplish before anyone else the ascent of a particular peak, or the exploitation of a new route. There are those who set store by record times, and have even been known to race on a mountain. There are those who collect summits like postage-stamps. But apart from this, competition in athletic sports is not in itself an evil. We do not deprecate the successful track-runner, and there is nothing particularly immoral in either running or ski-ing faster than your neighbour. . . . Furthermore, the ski-racer is not in truth thinking of any reward, not even, in most cases, of the bare joy of victory. When Mr. Bracken and Mr. Mackintosh and Miss Sale-Barker were in their prime no one could hope to beat them. But that fact did not diminish the number of entries against them. Men and women run in ski races partly for the fun of the thing, because, to those who can do it, a hard race with the pace set by one of those whom I have mentioned is as exhilarating as a fast run out hunting, and partly to increase their own technical mastery. For those who blame the ski-runner in this matter have usually not taken the trouble to understand the conditions of the sport, or the spirit which governs it." The last sentence of this urbane and generous tribute to a great sport is the key to the attitude which Claud Schuster condemns. Those who blamed the ski-racer had not taken the trouble to understand either "the conditions of the sport or the spirit which governs it."

Strange that it should have been necessary, and it certainly was necessary, to remind an Alpine Club audience that "competition in athletic sports is not in itself an evil . . . there is nothing particularly immoral in either running or ski-ing faster than your neighbour." The Alpine Club may have been influenced by the fact that we are promised a brave new world in which competition shall be replaced by co-operation, and the uncompetitive mountaineer may be an intelligent anticipation of the uncompetitive citizen of the future. A new Adam purged of the "profit motive" and inspired only by true ambition to serve his fellow men. But whatever be the demerits of competition in business or in mountaineering, it is plain silly to criticise skiers for being interested in competitive ski-ing.

II

Modern ski-racing is an exacting test of courage, skill and endurance. Courage, for though the risk of a fatal injury is far less than in mountaineering, the risk of a serious injury is far greater. A mountaineer's first fall is often his last ; the majority never come off on rocks or on ice during their entire mountaineering career, but high speed crashes are part of the routine of ski-racing. Eighty miles an hour has been electrically timed on the "Flying kilometre" of St. Moritz, and there can be few modern races in which the speed of sixty miles an hour is not approached or exceeded. It is not easy to hold the ground at such speeds, particularly when the ski leave the ground over bumps. The racer must be prepared to take severe punishment—a sixty mile an hour fall, perhaps head first, is never pleasant—not only during the race itself but also during the weeks of practice. The risks of a broken limb are very high. About half the international cracks broke their legs before finishing their career, and many of them returned to the arena when their fractures had healed. Jeanette Kessler and Nell Carroll won the most coveted of all ski-ing badges, the Gold Arlberg-Kandahar, after breaking their legs, Isabel Roe and Helen Palmer-Tomkinson broke their legs and returned to win the British Ladies' Downhill Racing Championships.

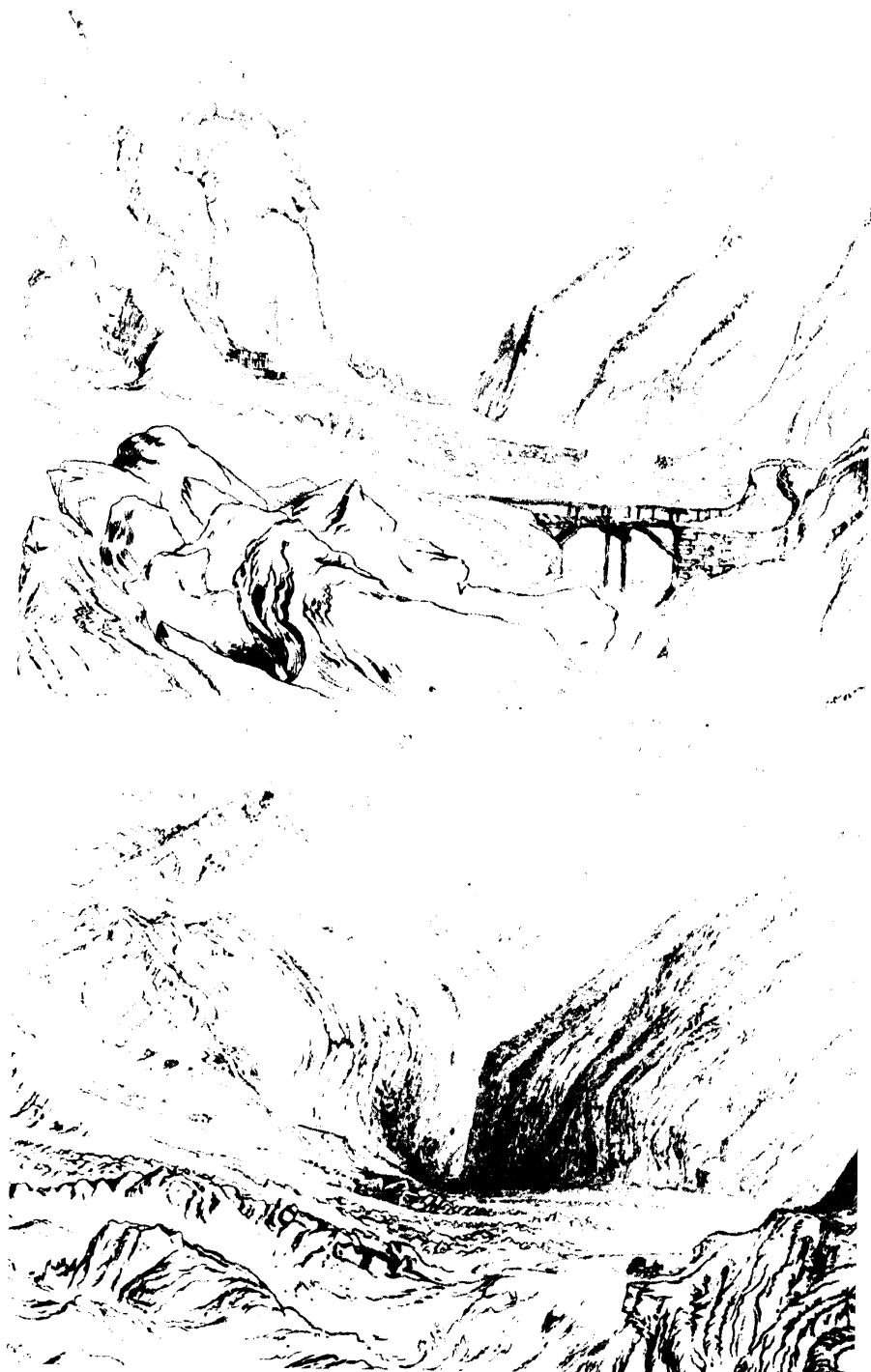
My son Peter who raced in more World Championships than any other international racer (seven and in addition the Olympic Games) has described the increasing tension of the final days before the World Championship.

"Perhaps the most exciting days," he writes, "were those spent practising over the course before the race. There would probably be one slope of outstanding difficulty, and here all the racers would congregate. I will try to describe a typical scene, a scene which is a composite of memories rather than the recollection of any particular incident. The British team are climbing up the most difficult slope on the course for the first time ; we climb slowly, examining every bump and frequently turning round so as to familiarise ourselves with the line from above. At the top of the slope a small group is huddled together, obviously discussing the best line, for periodically one of them points down the slope with his stick. We strain our eyes upwards and recognise the Swiss

team. Suddenly one of them starts down the slope ; perhaps it is Zogg, or Furrer, or one of the Steuris. All the other competitors on the slope stand still and watch him. Perhaps he takes a very dangerous line and then our nerves tauten as we watch. If the racer falls, there will be seconds of suspense while one wonders whether he has injured himself. Then, as he picks himself up, one's weaker self will start arguing that that line at any rate is impossible and that there is no need to make certain by trying it oneself. But if he holds that dangerous line, which perhaps means racing past rocks and tree-stumps at high speed, one will feel suddenly weak because one knows that one will have to follow the same line oneself several times, on the day of the race itself and in the days of practice beforehand.

" Later one stands at the top of the slope and knows, as one starts down, that all the other competitors are turning to watch. If one tackles the slope well, they will be asking each other who one is and what country one represents. On these occasions, perhaps as much as on any others a racer felt the thrill of carrying his country's colours. For the competitors up and down the slope would all be in national groups, and it was a wonderful experience for any racer who could impress them with what his countrymen could do. In the race itself one skied in front of a large crowd, the majority of whom were quite incapable of appreciating the finer points of technique. But in practice the racer was watched by the most intelligent ski-ing audience in the world, his fellow competitors : the judgment of his peers. We competitors saw little of one another in the race, and those days of practice were our unique opportunity of watching the best ski-ing in the world. And good ski-ing is a wonderful thing, even when it is the ski-ing of one's most dangerous rivals from other countries. As a racer showed some unexpected brilliancy, the thrill of appreciation and excitement would, for a second or two at any rate, be untinged by any thought of rivalry or any feeling that one would now have to attempt that same brilliancy oneself. Once, when Sigmund Ruud showed real genius in tackling a certain hazard, the other competitors burst into spontaneous applause."

The interpretation of mountaineering in relation to its philosophy and psychology has been attempted, with varying measures of success, by scores of Alpine writers, but downhill ski-racing is still a young sport, and only one first-class racer has, so far, tried





to diagnose his emotions when racing or to interpret the relations of ski-racers to their rivals and that must be my excuse for the frequent quotations in this chapter from a contribution by Peter Lunn to the *British Ski Year Book* (1944).

III

To compare is not to equate. ABCD does not equal XBYZ because "there is a B in both," a glimpse of the obvious which will, I hope, placate those mountaineers who might otherwise be displeased by a comparison between the ethos of two clubs, the Alpine Club and the Kandahar, both of which have exercised a profound influence on sports which are native to Switzerland.

Skiers will find nothing in this brief section with which they are not already familiar, and can turn at once to Section (iv), for most skiers are aware of the fact that the British revolutionised competitive ski-ing, sponsored and obtained international recognition for the downhill racer, and invented the modern slalom.

In Norway and Sweden the classic competitions were decided on the combined results of a long-distance race, in which short ascents and descents succeeded each other, and a jumping competition. The *langlauf* (long-distance race) developed as naturally out of the gentle terrain in Scandinavia as the downhill race out of the mountainous terrain in the Alps, but the Alpine people instead of deciding their championships by racing down their magnificent mountains ran their *langlauf* races along their valley floors. The first protest against this method of deciding championships and the first published defence of downhill racing (with the veto on stick-riding) as the logical method of deciding Alpine championships will be found in my book *Ski-ing*, published in 1913.

My first task was to convert our own people, for the Ski Club of Great Britain followed Norwegian precedents and awarded its championship on the "classic combination" (*langlauf* and jumping). Our next problem was to obtain support in Switzerland, where our first ally was Walter Amstutz, and the Anglo-Swiss Universities ski race, which he and I organised together, was the first international event decided on the combined result of a pure downhill race and a slalom race. The slalom in its modern form is an invention of my own and has nothing but the name in common with the old slalom style competition, in which marks were given for style.

A slalom is a race down a course defined by pairs of flags *through* which competitors are required to pass. The flags are arranged so as to test every variety of turn, long and sweeping, short and abrupt.

That there should be opposition to the slalom was inevitable, but the skiers of the future will find it difficult to understand how anybody could ever have opposed the official recognition of downhill racing. It was not until the Oslo congress of 1930 that I succeeded, as the delegate of the Ski Club of Great Britain, in obtaining international recognition for downhill and slalom races. The rules which were adopted at Oslo were, to all intents and purposes, the same as the British Ski Racing Rules. It is no exaggeration to say that the British completely revolutionised competitive ski-ing.

In *Mountain Jubilee* I have tried to do justice to that gallant band of British ski-racers who were astonishingly successful in spite of the tremendous odds against them. All the great events were open to professionals, or rather to those whom we should regard as professionals, for the International Federation solved this troublesome problem by classifying ski-teachers as amateurs. There was no Alpine valley which was not potentially capable of producing ten times as many first-class racers as Great Britain, moreover the best runners of other countries were always available for World Championships, whereas our University runners were often unable to obtain leave from College presidents, and few of our skiers in business were as fortunate as Peter whose chief, Sir John Black, was a keen skier and who therefore gave him three weeks instead of the usual fortnight to train for the World Championship. I reckoned to lose about a third of my team through injuries in practice, and ended up in 1935 with only four racers for a World Championship limited to teams of six.

The odds against the ladies were less heavy. Many of them could stay out the entire winter. They were first in the field among the women skiers of Europe, and the first to prove that women could take part with success in competitive ski-ing.

The two principal events of the winter were the World Championship and the Arlberg-Kandahar. The former was twice won by British ladies (Esme Mackinnon and Evie Pinching). The latter has been won by Audrey Sale-Barker (twice), Esme Mackinnon and Jeanette Kessler. Lady Raeburn led the British Ladies team

to victory in the first three Anglo-Swiss Ladies matches. The Swiss Ladies Championship was won by Doreen Elliott and Jeanette Kessler, but the most remarkable of all achievements of our lady skiers was the performance of two of our girls in 1929. Doreen Elliott and Audrey Sale-Barker entered for the unofficial downhill race included as an experiment in the World Championship at Zakopane, Poland, and finished 14th and 15th respectively in a field of 60 men competitors.

C. E. W. Mackintosh and W. Bracken finished second in unofficial races included in the World Championship programmes. Bracken was third in the Arlberg-Kandahar and first in the slalom. Mackintosh, Bracken and Peter Lunn were often victorious in races with a strong international entry. (Peter Lunn and Audrey Sale-Barker were recipients of the Pery Medal for consistent success in international events. This medal, which is awarded for outstanding achievement in any branch of ski-ing, has so far been awarded to eight recipients.) When our skiers were competing against those whom we should regard as amateurs, they more than held their own. Mackintosh, Leonard Dobbs, Anthony Knebworth, Bill Clyde, Jimmy Palmer-Tomkinson, Colin Wyatt, J. G. Appleyard (killed in Italy) and H. M. Muir (killed in Libya) did brilliantly in University ski races. In the last winter before the war Robert Readhead won the Duke of Kent, which is restricted to skiers domiciled in non-mountainous country. (A skier from Bern or Zürich would be eligible, but not a native of Grindelwald or Zermatt.) Marion Steedman won the Ladies Alpine-Kandahar. The British Universities beat both the Swiss Universities and the Italian Universities, scoring the first places in a six-a-side team race against the latter.

It was a great skater, Mr. T. D. Richardson, who described the achievements of British racers, during this period as "one of the most remarkable achievements of modern British sport."

IV

The Kandahar Ski Club was founded at Mürren on January 30th, 1924, and took its name from the Earl Roberts of Kandahar Challenge Cup, the world's senior challenge cup for downhill ski-racing. It was at Mürren that the first slaloms were held and the rules for slalom racing evolved. The Kandahar is affiliated

to the Ski Club of Great Britain, which gives a remarkably efficient service in return for a modest subscription of ten shillings, as a result of which its membership exceeded 8,000 at the outbreak of the war.

In 1928, two years before the International Federation recognised downhill and slalom racing, the Kandahar founded at St. Anton, with the co-operation of Hannes Schneider, the Arlberg-Kandahar race, which was immediately recognised as the blue ribbon of downhill racing. In 1932 the Kandahar presented a challenge cup to the Canadian Amateur Ski Association. "Of all events in Eastern Canada," writes the reporter for the *Canadian Skier*, March, 1942, "the Kandahar boasts the richest, most colourful background, wherefore it is held in the highest esteem." "The Annual Quebec-Kandahar," writes H. P. Douglas, the doyen of Canadian skiers, "has now become the most important combined downhill and slalom race in Canada," (*Canadian Ski Year Book*, 1939-40). The Kandahar also founded the Far West Kandahar (held on the Pacific Coast) and the Kandahar of the Andes held alternately in Chile and Argentina. As a result of these activities the name of an Afghan town is now known throughout the ski-ing world, a fact which enterprising manufacturers have exploited, for the word "Kandahar" is now associated with special ski bindings, ski boots and racing ski.

A comparison between the august and venerable Alpine Club and the high-spirited and youthful Kandahar, both of which in their different ways have helped to mould and shape sports which are native to Switzerland, is relevant to the thesis of this book, the relations of the English not only to Switzerland but also to the Swiss.

The great prestige of the Victorian Alpine Club was partly due to the fact that many of its leading members were famous in other than mountaineering circles. The club attracted not only the natural athlete and the intellectual athlete, but also the non-athletic intellectual. In the fifties little more was demanded of candidates than evidence of a genuine interest in the mountains. Matthew Arnold, for instance, was elected on one easy snow pass, the Théodule, and at no time have candidates been required to satisfy the committee that they could lead a guideless party on a moderately difficult expedition. What differentiated the club from purely athletic clubs was the fact that it attracted the type of man who found among the mountains the satisfaction of deeper

needs than those which are gratified by athletic competition. The mountain mystic was not necessarily an athlete, and fortunately one need not be an athlete to follow a good guide up the Matterhorn.

There is, as we shall see, a mysticism of speed no less than of the mountains, but it would be idle to pretend that intellectuals or mystics predominated among the high-spirited young men who hurled themselves down "Lone Tree Slope" or the "Nose Dive" in the course of the Kandahar test. The entrance test, though not particularly exacting, was stiff enough to exclude the hopelessly unathletic.

Mountaineering may be either the most exacting or the least exacting of hard sports. First-class ski-racing, judged solely by athletic criteria, ranks considerably below mountaineering as practised by the élite, and considerably above mountaineering as practised by the rank and file. But there are other criteria than the purely athletic. Culture in the broader sense of the word should include not only agriculture but any sport which exacts from its devotees an intimate study of nature in any one of her many aspects. Now a mastery of mountaineering necessarily involves a detailed knowledge of the habits of rock and ice and snow, and even the ski-tourer who never ventures into the high Alps soon learns to recognise and predict a wide range of snows of different speed and texture, but this glorious variety of snow surfaces does not exist for the racer. In order to equalise snow conditions for the competitors the courses in all important races are stamped hard, either by the competitors in practice, or by platoons of workers in the untoward event of a snowfall before or during the race. The hard-beaten snow of a race course is the easiest, dullest and deadest of all snow surfaces.

Compared with mountaineering on foot or on ski, ski-racing has little or no cultural value. Even so, ski-racing has more in common with mountaineering than with "the tobogganing of savages down steep slopes," a remark which continues to rankle, for ski-racing, like mountaineering, is an ascetic sport. Happiness rather than pleasure is the reward for which men climb mountains or race down them on ski. Pleasure vanishes with the entry of pain, but the higher forms of happiness are the by-product of pain and fear. In his book *High-Speed Ski-ing*, Peter Lunn writes:—

"Racers get very little pleasure out of ski-ing, even when they are not racing and it appears that the longer one has skied the

less one enjoys it. When the novice learns to ski he is experiencing for the first time the thrill of speed in its finest form ; for the skier, speed is not diluted by transmission through mechanism, nor is its enjoyment marred by restriction to a specially prepared run.

" Gradually, however, the skier becomes hardened to the thrill of speed, and he must ski ever faster if he wishes to enjoy it. Thus the minimum speed at which he begins to be interested by, and to draw active pleasure from, ski-ing becomes steadily higher.

" Unfortunately the maximum speed at which he can ski without being frightened does not increase so rapidly ; in fact, once he has overcome his initial nervousness it tends to remain about the same, for, at high speeds, the experienced runner is very nearly as frightened as the mediocre performer of hitting a rock or crashing into a tree.

" Consequently the minimum speed at which a skier can enjoy ski-ing increases more rapidly than the maximum speed at which he can ski without being frightened. As soon as the day comes that the minimum speed at which he begins to draw pleasure from ski-ing is faster than the maximum speed at which he can ski without being frightened, he will cease to enjoy ski-ing. It is difficult to realise why, once the skier has reached this stage, he should continue to ski, and still more difficult to understand why he should race. It is the problem of the drive behind ascetic sports, the drive which causes a man to endure acute physical discomfort in order to row in the shortest possible time from Putney to Mortlake, and which causes men to undergo the dangers and hardships of mountaineering. . . . The real drive behind racing and all ascetic sports lies, in the very essence of sport, which consists in the mind trying to force the body to do exactly what the mind wants it to. The racer's mind must overcome the physical reactions, which shrink from the fastest line on steep slopes, and must keep the body under the control necessary for performing turns with complete precision. When the racer is ski-ing well there come moments when he knows that his mind has won, and for a few brief seconds he has complete control over his body. Such moments are rare, but it is for them that men endure the physical discomforts attendant upon all ascetic sports, for they then experience a happiness, almost an ecstasy, which has nothing in common with pleasure or enjoyment as these terms are normally understood.

" The racer draws from ski-ing, therefore, two distinct kinds of

happiness, the one a purely physical sensual pleasure which comes from the thrill of speed, and the other a deep spiritual happiness which comes from dominion over his body. The former diminishes with experience, but the latter happiness increases until, in the end, it gains such a strong hold over him that he finds it impossible to give up racing, even when he has long passed the height of his powers.”

Let me reassure the mountaineer who may suspect that I am trying to build an ascetic bridge between mountaineers and skiracers and to conceal the differences on which he is so anxious to insist. On the contrary I am anxious to draw his attention to one point in which the difference seems to me to tell in favour of the skiers. The Alpine clubmen came into contact with the Swiss who were professionally interested in tourists, they knew the hotel-keepers and the guides. In the pages of *The Alpine Journal* you will find many appreciative references to the great hotel-keeping dynasties, the Bosses of Grindelwald, the Couttets of Chamonix, the Seilers of Zermatt, the Bons and the Badrutts of St. Moritz, and also, of course, to the great guides. But there were very few contacts between the British and the Swiss amateurs, or between our University mountaineering clubs and the members of the Academic Alpine clubs of Bern or Zürich. An occasional Swiss joined the Alpine Club and the relations between the *leaders* of mountaineering in the two countries were always cordial, but at lower levels the contacts were few and far between.

The Anglo-Swiss University Ski Race which dates from 1925 was the first real bridge between the University students of the two countries. And once the bridge was built the rest was easy, for our young men soon discovered that they had a great deal in common with the Swiss, the same reluctance to take their training seriously, the same detestation of the new atmosphere which the Nazis were doing their best to introduce into competitive ski-ing, and the same firm resistance to the slightest suspicion of regimentation. At prize-givings and inaugural parades, the contrast between the slick efficiency with which the German team stood to attention while our national anthem was being played was in marked contrast to the lack-lustre attitude of the British and Swiss irrespective of the country that was being honoured by the band. Both teams detested the growing pomposity, ritual and flag flapping which replaced the pleasant informality of the earlier meetings.

Our amateurs could hold their own against the best amateurs of

snow-rich countries, and sometimes brought off astonishing victories against those who would be classified as professionals in any other sport but ski-ing. Now whereas it was the *assistance* of Swiss guides which rendered possible the triumphs of Victorian mountaineers, it was in *competitions against* the best guides that the Georgian ski-racers achieved their most prized successes. The great guides were regarded with profound respect and affection by their employers, but even so the relationship between the amateur and the guide whom he employs is very different from the relations between the skiers and the guides against whom they raced. The only point of the comparison is to draw attention to a *change* of relationship, for the British amateur who distinguished himself in international racing was automatically promoted from the ranks of the "Herren" who *employed* guides to the peerage of those who competed as equals *against* guides in a dangerous and exacting sport, and who knew each other as Christopher and Otto, Bill and Willi, Peter and Fritz, Jimmy and Herman, as the case may be. I remember the astonishment of an English lady whose Etonian son, Bill Clyde, had just won the International University Ski Championship, when the concierge greeted her with the remark, "We are all so pleased that Bill did so well at St. Moritz."

Even Hitler could only impair but could not destroy this international freemasonry. "Mürren proved," wrote the manager of the Austrian team after the 1935 World Championship at Mürren, "that there still exists an international family of downhill ski-runners."

"Looking back on international racing," writes Peter Lunn, "and trying to analyse the memories it has left me, I realise one thing with great clearness and considerable surprise. It is that I cannot think of a single international racer whom I disliked. There were blazing rows, and I can remember being right in the middle of at least one of them; on several occasions competitors contested the decisions of officials in a disgraceful manner, but I cannot recall a single instance of two racers quarrelling with each other. From what I saw of the figure-skating and ice-hockey at the Olympic Games, ski-racing is an exceptional sport in this particular. And I think the reason is that the ski-racers were united by having to solve a common problem. We all met practising over the course, and we all had to face the same difficulties and dangers; it was only natural that we should exchange ideas as to the correct racing

line. Of course, the Nazis tried to discipline their team into an attitude of unsporting egoism, which allowed no contact with other competitors. But even after the Nazis came into power, I can remember practising with Rudi and Christl Cranz, who were racing for Germany, and discussing the course with them just as frankly as I would have done with British competitors. And it was an Austrian, Hans Nöbl, who broke his leg in the 1935 FIS and yet, though in considerable pain, shouted advice to me as I came past a few moments later. He had crashed because he took a particular line too fast. As I came down the same line he yelled that I would never hold it unless I checked. His advice came too late, as I was already committed to the line I had chosen, and I fell heavily shortly afterwards. I did not injure myself, as he had done, but I wasted valuable seconds."

Though it is true that some foreign "competitors contested the decision of officials," it was an unbroken tradition of British ski-ing that no disqualification or penalty should ever be questioned by us. The only protest which was ever made by a British team was a protest signed by all the captains including the captain of the organising country against a delay in flagging a course and deflecting competitors from concealed rocks.

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That "the skier's mind is occupied entirely in winning races—as the mountaineer would say, in mere pot-hunting," was, as Claud Schuster remarked, in a passage which I have already quoted, a frequent charge. The pot-hunter in the precise rather than in the vague and abusive sense of the term is a man who is more interested in the pot than in the hunt. He is the equivalent of the peak-bagger "who collects summits like postage stamps." Both types exist but the pot-hunter is no more common in ski-racing than the peak-bagger in mountaineering.

"The pride of priority," writes Irving, "looms terribly large in the annals of mountaineering. The jealousy over first ascents, the desire to belittle the achievements of earlier climbers, betrays itself over and over again especially in the case of the most famous peaks." I think that Irving exaggerates the extent to which mountaineering has suffered from the infection of the Alpine equivalent of the pot-hunter, but of course no sport is wholly free

from his contamination. The few lines in a *Climber's Guide* which record the names of those who took part in a first ascent are the Alpine equivalent of the Challenge Cups for which ski-racers compete, but I am convinced that for most mountaineers the joy of battle against rock and ice, not the incidental prestige of a first ascent, is the dominant motive, and I am no less convinced that what a ski-racer has described as the "tremendous exhilaration which is born of the passionate desire to master the difficulties of every slope in a race course" is the real magnet which attracts men to the perils of modern ski-racing. The applause of the crowd which corresponds to the compliments of an Alpine Club President in his Valedictory Address is of secondary importance compared to "the confidence and happiness" which is the reward of holding a difficult and dangerous racing line.

I must apologise for quoting once again from the only racer who has attempted to analyse the ski-racing mosaic of anxiety, fear and exhilaration.

"On the day of the race itself I would climb to the start in a condition of appalling nervousness, wondering why on earth I endured such misery and wishing never to race again. I do not think that this nervousness can be described as stage fright, because everybody seemed to suffer from it before the straight race but nobody did before the slalom, even though in an important slalom one had to compete solo in front of a very large crowd. The conclusion from which is that a very large part of one's nervousness before the straight race was simply due to physical fear. The racer had made up his mind to follow a particular line, and that line inevitably entailed certain risks. It is true that the racer had almost certainly taken exactly the same line in practice, but then he had been able to choose his own moment and brace himself for the effort. But in the race he had to start at the exact moment the starter told him. He was no longer a free agent but was caught in the toils of a remorseless organisation.

"I was never one of those who found that all nervousness departed as soon as the starter had said, "Los." I was always uneasy on the top slopes, in fact I was always uneasy until I had faced the worst slope of the course. This normally came about half-way down and could be considered the crisis of the race. If I held my line there, I was filled with such confidence and happiness that all subsequent hazards seemed easy. Suddenly I would find

a tremendous exhilaration in my ski-ing, and would leap into every slope with a passionate desire to master its difficulties.

"And it was difficult to lose one's nervousness on the top slopes for another reason: because they were so bleak. They made one realise that ski-racing is an intensely individualistic sport. The racer never sees another competitor except on the rare occasions when he overhauls somebody else, or is himself overhauled. There is no team spirit possible, for each racer must face alone and unaided the hazards of the course. A race is like a struggle against nature rather than a competition against one's fellow men. The top slopes of the course are always empty of spectators, and this accentuates the racer's feeling of a lonely contest with something inhuman. He feels isolated in the vast landscape and rather helpless; he does not feel that he can ever master the course's hazards, but instead that these will conquer him and buffet him mercilessly. But on the bottom slopes the racer skies between serried ranks of spectators, and he feels somehow that they are his allies against nature. Sometimes the spectators cheered, and there are few things more exhilarating than being cheered when one is doing something difficult and slightly dangerous. It is quite different from being cheered in cold blood at a prize-giving: that is very nice, but it is in no way exhilarating. But to race between ranks of cheering spectators, and to hear the applause swelling as one approaches, that is wonderful. It happened to me once or twice because in the old days, before the group draw, I started immediately behind bad racers and passed them on the lower stages. The public would seldom realise that there is nothing commendable in gaining a minute on a bad racer, or one who has met misfortune on the way down, and would thrill to the sight of a lower number overhauling a higher. It is perhaps not very praiseworthy that one should enjoy being cheered under patently false pretences, but I can only say that I did enjoy it very much indeed and am sorry to think that it will never happen to me again."

If British racers had been tried on the charge of preferring the pot to the hunt, the jury would have returned a verdict for the defendants without waiting for the judge to sum up. The witnesses for the defence would have sufficed to smash the case for the prosecution.

Why was the British Ski Championship a success only when it was held in a district frequented by the leading racers? Because

the racing "Aces" who would travel across Switzerland for the fun of competing in an open event against the best Swiss could hardly be induced to cross the valley to compete for a closed championship. In the early days of the Kandahar, Mackintosh and Bracken were in a class by themselves. During Mackintosh's absence from Mürren, Bracken won four races in succession, and did not enter for the fifth race because he thought it was time that somebody else should win. This made a present of the race to J. A. Joannides who promptly scratched on the ground that the "entry had been cooked." He brought the matter before the committee. "I come to Mürren because the Kandahar has the best British racers. I race to see how near I can be to Mackintosh or Bracken and I don't want to take home a consolation prize because I'm not good enough to beat them." As a result of this protest Bracken entered for and won the next race.

A justified protest, which the committee subsequently upheld, against the entry of a very fine foreign racer for the Duke of Kent, met with strong opposition from the British competitors who did not care whether the competitor was or was not technically qualified but who were anxious to have the fun of racing against him. Finally I have described in *Mountain Jubilee* the whole-hearted support given by the British team to the French, Swiss and Italians who threatened to withdraw from the Winter Olympics because, at the last moment, the Olympic Committee decided to exclude ski-teachers. The British team, which included no ski-teacher, had everything to gain by the exclusion of their strongest competitors. Theirs was the only instance which has come to my knowledge of a team threatening to boycott a meeting unless conditions which *reduced* their chances of success were changed in favour of their competitors.

All of which seems to show that pot-hunters were no more common in the Kandahar than peak-baggers in the Alpine Club. The pot meant no more and no less to the ski-racer than the peak to the climber. Pot and peak are symbols of a struggle. Victory matters but matters far less than the spirit of the game. And it is because we play to win but not to win at all costs that we are equally opposed to the indiscriminate use of pitons by Nazi desperados and to the Nazi practice of training so-called amateur ski-teams on the glaciers in August and continuing that training throughout the autumn and winter.

There is, of course, nothing new in the folly which seeks to measure national achievements by the barometer of sport. When Alcibiades was attacked by Nikias he replied, much as a Nazi athlete might have replied, that he had entered seven chariots and taken first three places at Olympia, and brought great glory to Athens thereby. Who cares to-day whether Athens beat Sparta at Olympia? Who cares how far the discobolus was thrown by the young man who caught Myron's fancy. That young athlete lives because art endures. Few things are more ephemeral than athletic fame, and only one thing is more lasting than art. The Nazi exploitation of sport in the interests of their disgusting ideology ruined the atmosphere of the World Championship and transformed it from a sporting contest into a rehearsal for war. Even secondary races were affected. "Deeply disappointed by the results of the Downhill race," Hitler telegraphed to the captain of a University team, "expect you to do better in the Slalom." His expectations were not fulfilled. They did worse. At the banquets following the races, Nazis who had disgraced themselves often acted the role of skeleton at the feast, and it was because our teams were light-hearted about results and had a reputation for making a party go that they were in tremendous demand. I was pestered throughout the winter by organisers anxious to secure a British entry. "The British proved themselves charming hosts even though they lost" was the disingenuous comment of a newspaper reporter on the festivities which followed a team race in which we had been defeated. The party after the Mürren World Championship of 1931 became proverbial. "Nicht wie in Mürren" was a comment often heard after less riotous and more formal banquets. Elsewhere the sports-leaders, officials and distinguished guests either dined at a different table from the competitors or in a different room. They wore evening dress and decorations, whereas most of the competitors had never owned evening dress. At Mürren the only decorations permitted were ski-ing badges, and we all dined in ski-ing clothes.

I did what I could in speeches at prize-giving, and in occasional broadcasts, such as a broadcast after the winter Olympic games, to debunk the hysterical nationalism of the Nazis, and our efforts to save what could be saved of the pre-Nazi atmosphere were not wholly wasted. From the first we tried to emphasise the sense of an international freemasonry of skiers as an antidote to the in-

creasing international rivalry between ski-ing teams. When the first World Championship in Downhill racing was held at Mürren we refused to publish team results, but unfortunately this precedent was not followed at the next World Championship. I succeeded, however, in maintaining the character of the Arlberg-Kandahar in spite of the well meant efforts of a whisky manufacturer who offered us an extremely expensive trophy to be awarded for a team race to be held in connection with the Kandahar, the first five competitors from each country in that event to count towards the whisky trophy. His offer was declined.

There is an interesting parallel between our attitude and that of the Alpine Club. In a recent letter (3.3.44), Geoffrey Young writes, "I spent weeks in talk each year with the whole greater group of English climbers and I can recall no single allusion to any international feeling. Foreign climbers were mountaineers to us not Swiss, or Italians; Sella, Crivelli, and so on were *in* the freemasonry of climbers. Not possible competitors or outsiders." "In the Arlberg," I wrote in my account of the 1936 Arlberg-Kandahar, "the racers meet not as representatives of nations, but as members of the ski-ing brotherhood. They race not to prove that one political system or ski school is superior to a rival system or school, but to prove that they are faster downhill than their rivals. None cheered Furrer the Swiss more heartily than the Arlbergers when he appeared through the cornice, and an Arlberg course-controller was so furious when Furrer fell that he abused the crowd for three minutes for cheering him too heartily. Their noise, he explained, had put poor Furrer off. Everybody was delighted that Allais, the Frenchman, who finished second in a whole series of big races last winter, managed to pull off the Downhill Race. And we were all pleased that the Arlberg Club pulled off a double victory in the event in which bad luck had dogged them for years."

A decent pride in the achievements of one's own fellow countrymen, whether in mountaineering or ski-racing, is quite consistent with the conviction that the international freemasonry of mountaineering or ski-ing, as the case may be, is something more precious than the successes which are credited to any particular nation.

And it was because the Arlberg-Kandahar was, first and foremost, a reunion of the leading "Aces" in a great international brotherhood, that there was no event which was so popular both with the racers and with the onlookers.

Hitler invaded Austria a few days before the Arlberg-Kandahar was due to take place. Hannes Schneider was thrown into a concentration camp from which he was ultimately released, and allowed to leave Austria for America. I have described in *Mountain Jubilee* the unavailing efforts of highly placed Nazis to persuade us to return to the Arlberg, and a conversation which I, at least, enjoyed with the Nazis who travelled with me from St. Anton to Innsbruck on an ineffective mission of appeasement. They would have despised me if I had given in. "Can't you persuade that old fool Arnold," said Le Fort, Nazi ski leader, to Patsy Richardson, "to bring the Arlberg-Kandahar back to St. Anton?" "Would you bring it back if you were he?" replied Richardson, and Le Fort, taken off his guard, replied "I should not."

Our refusal to compromise with the evil thing was described by an indulgent reviewer of *Mountain Jubilee* as "The first Allied victory of this war," a compliment which I liked none the worse because I knew that it could not survive dispassionate analysis.

CHAPTER XIV

SWITZERLAND AND THE SWISS

PUISQU'ON ne peut se battre pour de bon, on se bat au moins sur le terrain de la charité. . . . Chacun son rôle. Les autres meurent. . . . Nous, on fait les bons Samaritains. . . . On va se légitimer aux yeux de l'Europe. D'autres tuent. Nous, on sauve."—
Ce qu'en pense Potterat.

If Switzerland did not exist, to parody a famous saying, it would be necessary to invent her. Thousands owe their lives to this miniature mosaic of races in the heart of Europe. In the first World War prisoners suffering from consumption, serious illness or grave wounds were interned in Switzerland, but it was not only the Fighting Forces that profited by Swiss enterprise and Swiss charity. Old men, women and children repatriated from occupied France by arrangement with the German Government, passed through Switzerland on their journey home. They arrived in a pitiable condition. They left well-clothed and well-shod. In Zürich, Basle and Schaffhausen it was almost a disgrace for a well-to-do family to have more than one spare suit of clothes. At the end of the war the Swiss of all classes voluntarily deprived themselves of part of their bread ration to help the starving children of Austria. After the Armistice the railway men of Switzerland combined to provide homes for the starving children of Vienna. "*Pas d'argent, pas de Suisse*" was the old sneer. *Pas de Suisse, pas d'argent* would be nearer the mark so far as many thousand victims of this war and the last are concerned. The English-born wife of the famous skier, Walter Amstutz, contributed to the 1943 issue of the *British Ski Year Book* with her impressions of Switzerland in the second World War. She writes :—

"Switzerland has, as usual, played a tremendous role in charity. Our purses and our homes were strained to the utmost by children who came for three months from occupied countries to be fed and tranquillised, as well as we strangers could do it. One train-load of such little ones arrived in Zürich and, when all the foster-mothers had departed with their children, a sad little mite was left on the platform. She was one too many ! The engine driver who had brought them from the frontier marched off with her to his own





home—there is always room for one more in Switzerland. Alas, we can no longer have these children, for they are not allowed to leave their homes, but the Red Cross has arranged that we may 'adopt' them where they are. All we must do is send money each month and the Red Cross in each district puts the most needed goods into the hands of the individual. I have two of these children and I wish I could quote from the letters they write me! Scarcely a home here where one or more of these children have not been adopted; schools, offices, shop-girls, all club together and take one, and so the charity flows out from the Swiss. Apart from these children, the number of civil refugees in the country is enormous, and in 1940 thousands of military refugees crossed our frontiers, French, Polish, and about a hundred English. The Polish and French soldiers were in a pitiful state and I thought I would try and fit out ten of these poor wretched men with underwear, shirts, socks, handkerchiefs, soap, etc., for they were literally in rags. I asked a few friends to help. Within ten days I had been able to fit out not ten, but two hundred and fifty men! The idea had grown like some giant snowball and people completely unknown had sent me things. I went round our village begging; one woman took two shirts off her washing line and rolled them up and gave them to me. 'I must just wash a little oftener,' she said with a smile."

In the first World War we professed to be fighting not only for ourselves but also for the small nations and oppressed nationalities, and we proved our sincerity at Versailles by liberating the peoples of Poland, Esthonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Czechoslovakia from their oppressors, but to-day only those who can defy the tyranny of fashion still find virtue in the outmoded concept of freedom for the weak no less than for the strong. "The small weak State," writes that distinguished progressive, Sidney Dark, "is an international nuisance. It is generally misgoverned. It is nearly always jealous of its neighbours." Upon which the best comment was that of an editorial in *The Nineteenth Century* (April, 1943). "The fashionable contempt for small countries is not reached by any process of reasoning, but belongs to the irrational cult which has been called 'the cult of the colossal,' and arises out of a certain coarseness of mind which is more impressed by some crude monstrosity in monumental granite than by the most exquisite cameo."

We have much to learn from Switzerland. This little country,

the playground of Europe in time of peace, the healing place of the nations in time of war, is also a university in which democrats might yet discover, before it is too late, the only cure for the mortal maladies of which all democracies have perished in the past. Recent history provides abundant justification for the pessimism of Aristotle's well-known saying :—" Democracy is only a transition phase between Aristocracy and Tyranny."

There is little danger of Switzerland evolving into a tyrant state, for individual liberty in Switzerland is based on foundations more solid than the political rhetoric of demagogues. It would puzzle most Swiss to explain why totalitarianism, whether of the right or of the left, may well despair of Switzerland, for the conditions which render Switzerland secure against tyranny have their roots in the remote past. "In the old days," Aldous Huxley said to me in 1941, "there was always somebody to appeal to—the Emperor against the Pope, or the nobles against the King—but we are now moving towards the Moloch of the centralised totalitarian state against whose verdict there is no appeal." Switzerland, on the other hand, still maintains the saving principle of the distribution of power. The Cantons jealously preserve their rights and resist Federal centralisation. The peasantry are not subordinated to the towns, for no Swiss government would dare to ignore the claims of the peasantry. On the other hand, the urban workers have been as successful as any trade unionists in Europe in ameliorating their condition. Switzerland thus maintains a well-balanced economy between town and country, and a balance of powers as between the Cantons and the Federal Government.

Secondly, the Swiss have always believed in the distribution of property, particularly property in the means of production, such as land or a small business. The foundations of the Swiss way of life were laid in 1294, when the assembled people of Schwyz resolved in public assembly that it should in future be forbidden to sell land either to ecclesiastical corporations or to strangers beyond the borders of the Canton. The prejudice against the concentration of landed property in the hands of the few still persists. A Swiss member of Parliament (Nationalrat) told me that a wealthy foreigner had been trying to buy up such plots of land as were for sale in a mountain village. The reaction of the community was instinctive and final. The word went round that nobody was to sell. On the other hand, had the refugee merely wished to buy enough ground

on which to build a house with a garden attached no obstacles would have been placed in his way. Similarly, when an enterprising financier decided to introduce the chain-store system into mountain villages for the sale of ski, skates, etc., in winter, ice-axes and alpenstocks, etc., in summer, the Swiss without fuss or controversy passed the necessary legislation to protect the local people from this form of competition. They realised that it was far better that a man with his roots in the village should continue to sell ice-axes and ski than that these things should be sold at a lower price by the employee of a rich man in Berne. Cheapness is one of the things which may prove very expensive in the long run. The small man living off his own land or off the profits of a small business which he owns is a bulwark of freedom. Transform him into an employee and you have taken the first step on the road which leads to the Tyrant state.

Swiss democracy works because it is both conservative and progressive, the Tory democracy of which Disraeli dreamed, but which he never achieved. "In those fifteen months," writes Mr. Eugene Bagger in his book *The Heathen are Wrong*, "I came to regard Switzerland as the finest democracy in the world, a democracy based on the effort of hard thinking, and the dignity of hard work and the beauty of self-imposed discipline. It was the one democracy in Europe that was on the one hand truly democratic, and on the other hand *worked*: and this was because of all the European democracies it remained most faithful to the Christian origin of our civilisation. It was the most advanced of the European nations, because it was the most conservative."

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I began this book when the leaves in St. James's Park were beginning to turn, and I remembered the majesty of Alpine forests, and the sombre evergreens flecked with the flame of deciduous larches, and the mellow golden light of Switzerland in October. And as the days shortened the burden of exile became more grievous. I have glanced up from my typewriter, my mind held by the mountains which were my theme, and I have looked out on to the blinded vulgarity of an ugly street roofed by the grey disconsolate skies of an English winter, and I have felt as if never again would I see the sparkle of powder snow and the benediction of the Alpine sun.

But it is, perhaps, in March and April that this pain of this loss, this *pena damni* is most difficult to bear. I am writing these lines on Good Friday, and I know the precise spot near Alpnach where the triple-crested Wetterhorn shows through a tracery of cherry blossom, and exactly where I could find, near Schwendi, a cluster of marsh marigolds in a scanty plot of swampy ground, reclaimed from the snow, and there are primula and soldanella bordering the path from Mürren to Gimmelwald, and a tumult of many waters in the valley below.

And to-day my mind travels back to Alpine Eastertides. I remember a sudden snowstorm on a Good Friday, many years ago, the fierce reassertion of the mortmain of winter on a mountain valley which had rejoiced prematurely in the approach of spring. By Saturday the storm had spent its fury, and at noon the clouds broke through. Before the sun set the new snow had been stripped from the southern slopes, revealing vivid shoots of young grass thrusting through the dead herbage, and it was not only for the resurrection of our Lord, but for the resurrection of colour and warmth and life that we gave thanks on Easter Sunday, the church bells blending with the *te deum* of the nascent streams. Life and death confronted each other in the fields near the river, where the delta of a destructive avalanche had fanned out on a valley floor already carpeted by primula. In the Alps mountain and hill torrents enact their part in the drama of resurrection. "To be in England now that April's there" is curiously unsatisfying for those who cannot help contrasting the tranquil and domesticated loveliness of the English spring with the power and the violence and the majesty of the Alps in April.

And what does this Easter, of all Easters, mean to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death? Millions are waiting throughout occupied Europe for the hour of deliverance. From cathedral and village church and mountain chapel the ancient prayer rises to high heaven in the urgent accents of an endurance which is all too near the breaking point, the prayer that God will cleanse the world of great errors, heal the sick, feed the hungry, strike the fetters from the captives, and grant a safe return to the wanderers . . . *ut cunctis mundum purget erroribus : morbos auferat : famem depellat, aperiat carceres : vincula dissolvat : peregrinantibus reditum.* . . . For the first time since 1940 the message of Easter Sunday will be in accord with the mood of occupied Europe. The hour of

liberation is near, but at a great price will this freedom be obtained. Among those who will ransom Europe with their blood will be many to whom the mountains gave of their best, full measure and overflowing, many who were citizens of two countries, their own by birth and by allegiance, unto death, and Switzerland by spiritual adoption. And because "all good endings are but shining transitions" they too will see the mountains again.

Good Friday, 1944.

NOTES AND TRANSLATIONS

Page 16. Monsignor R. A. Knox, who won the Hertford, Ireland and Craven classical scholarships at Oxford, once wrote a paper on the Blindness of Homer in which he maintained that Homer had less eye for colour than for light, as Masson says Milton had. "The passages you would be most likely to quote," writes Msg. Knox, "in support of the idea that Homer DID appreciate scenery would be mostly nocturnes, especially the passage about the watch-fires (Iliad viii, 555). But I do not think that even these show much of an eye for scenery. I think you are really mixing up three possible questions :

I. Did the ancients really look at things at all, or only at people ?

II. Quatenus affirmative, did they ever look at landscape, or only at things in the immediate foreground ?

III. Did they appreciate violent scenery, thunderstorms, etc., or only quiet scenes with lambs browsing on tamarisks ?

As to (iii) I should say that the classical writers don't ever show that they have observed the gaunt, the rugged in scenery. But then, the eighteenth century still regarded such things as horrid. The Hebrews, as you say, were an exception, because they liked to see God show POWER. I think on a rough estimate you have to say that classical people didn't look at things at all. Just look at the number of words they have for personal deformities, knock-kneed, bow-legged, sloping-skulled, squinting, cast-in-the-eye, blear-eyed, and so on ; whereas they describe things so little that whenever you look up a flower (say) in the Lexicon you are told, ' A flower, perhaps the dandelion ; others think the holly-hock,' and so on."

(This confirms my general thesis that the Greek attitude to Nature is the expression of their all engrossing humanism. They have a wide range of epithets to express human qualities, but extremely few to describe the qualities of natural objects.)

"I have looked up," Msg. Knox continues, "my lecture on the Greeks at Sea, but I find there is only one allusion to scenery in it ; there I quote the ANERITHMON GELASMA" (innumerable laughter of the sea) "and say that that kind of attitude towards the sea is wholly exceptional until you get to Theocritus."

My confidence in the conclusions set forth in this chapter has been strengthened by the fact that those who believe that the Greeks had an eye for natural scenery so often quote the same passages, and that these passages are so few in number. For if a critic were to deny that the English loved sport, he would be confirmed in his error if his critics had to garner some twenty passages in praise of sport from writers selected over a period of four centuries. Yet this is the position of the Hellenist who sets himself the task of challenging the thesis advanced in Chapter II of the present book. The "innumerable laughter of the sea" is the first line of defence. The other passages which are usually quoted, merely prove that which is not in dispute, that mountains and the sea aroused emotions in the mind of the Greeks, but do not prove that the emotions in question were those of affection. Many passages merely point the contrast between conditions of comfort and discomfort. The Homeric shepherd in the famous "watch fire passage" rejoices when the storm ceases and the stars come out. Euripides, in Rhesus (1, 546) contrasts the discomfort of winter when Ida's snows slay the buds with the warmth of a windless noon on the Mediterranean, but it is not the love of the sea but the love of warmth, as opposed to wintry cold, which is expressed in this passage.

Two critics defend Homer's epithet "grey" as applied to the Mediterranean. Of course there are many days when the Mediterranean is off-colour, and snow, when it is melting, is often dark, particularly in city streets, but if a writer used "black" as one of his stock epithets for snow, we should begin to wonder whether he was as blind as Homer.

"Where does Homer 'express' admiration for Hector's courage?" one of my critics asks. "He makes one feel it without talking about it." Among the many epithets indicating courage which Homer applies to Hector are ἀγῆνωρ heroic and θρασύς courageous (II, xxii, 450 et seq.). If he had thought the sea beautiful he would have been equally explicit. But he didn't. Many omissions, noted by critics (i.e., the contrast between Olympian theology and that of the philosophers) are discussed in those four chapters of my book The Good Gorilla (not an autobiography, by the way) which are devoted to Greek culture. It is, of course, quite true, as Sir Richard Livingstone reminds me, that "what was very rare in

Greek is the modern godless humanism." In his study of the Greek genius, Sir Richard remarks that the Greeks are "the authors of the most beautiful statues, the most beautiful poems, the most beautiful buildings in the world," and it is perhaps not surprising that he should criticise as "going too far even for paradox" my statement that the supreme masterpieces of the Greek genius are St. John's Gospel in literature and Santa Sophia in architecture. Nothing in Greek literature appeals to me more than the finest short story in the world, the story of the woman taken in adultery, and I rank Santa Sophia (and Chartres) infinitely higher than the Parthenon, just as I rank Shakespeare above Æschylus and Donatello above Phidias.

Sir Richard's books owe much of their effect to his use of comparison. He constantly compares products of Greek and Christian culture. Comparisons, so far from odious, are of the greatest value. It is when we compare AB with BC that we fully understand the difference between A and C, and the significance of the common factor of B, but I have often noticed that Hellenists who find themselves unable to support their implied claim for the alleged pre-eminence of Hellenic culture, belittle the comparative method. "You can't compare Greek literature and the Bible." (You can.) "Why can't you be content to admire both Shakespeare and Euripides without comparing them?" Because it is only by comparison that we can understand the factor to which Shakespeare owes his pre-eminence. I am, of course, far more in sympathy with the most extreme champions of Hellenism than with the modern barbarians who despise the classical seedground of Western culture, and I was delighted that Sir Richard (who belongs to that older, more urbane, tradition in which men could praise the manner of an essay even where they disagreed with its conclusions) ended a very charming letter as follows: "But however much we may disagree in detail, there is one main point in which we are at one—that literature is meant to be read in the spirit of enjoyment, not in the melancholy way common in text books and examinations. I enjoyed what you read even where I disagreed."

Page 17. Lucretius. "When first the golden morning light of the radiant sun reddens over the grass, bejewelled with dew, and the never failing pools and rivers exhale a mist."

Page 21. "Quantus Athos, etc." "Great as Athos, or great as Eryx, or Father Appenninus himself, when raising himself to the sky, he resounds with his quivering oaks, and rejoices in his snowy peak."

Page 30. Goethe. "I saw in the eternal evening glow the silent world at my feet. Every height on fire, every valley at rest, the silver brook flowing into the golden stream."

Burnet. Leslie Stephen quotes "Bishop Burnet" and shortly afterwards, in the same chapter, refers to and quotes from Burnet's 'Sacred Theory of the Earth,' with the result that many readers must have assumed that both quotations are from the same Burnet. Even Alpine historians have been misled, as, for instance, Francis Gribble, who was, I think, the author of an interesting unsigned leader in *The Times Literary Supplement* (January 2nd, 1923) in the course of which the writer attributes to Bishop Gilbert Burnet Thomas Burnet's remark that mountains "have neither form nor beauty."

Page 46. Nouvelle Héloïse. Leslie Stephen gives the publication date as 1759, the date when the book was completed. It was actually published in 1760 at Amsterdam and in 1761 at Paris.

Page 47. Panentheism. Pantheists believe that everything is God, panentheists that God is in everything.

CHAPTER VIII

Page 103. Or, pour des raisons, etc. "Now for reasons, wholly metaphysical, the discussion of which is outside the limits of a simple study of art, the love of beauty must necessarily be sterile if beauty be only loved for the pleasures which it yields. And just as the pursuit of pleasure as an end in itself results only in boredom, and the attainment of happiness is only possible to those who search for something other than happiness, so æsthetic happiness is given to us in redundancy if we love Beauty for itself, as something real which exists independently of ourselves and which is infinitely more important than the joy which it inspires. And, far from being a dilettante or an æsthete, Ruskin was the exact opposite. Like Carlyle he was one of those who are warned by their genius of the vanity of all pleasure and, at the same time, intuitively perceive by inspiration the near presence of eternal reality. Talent is bestowed on them as the gift to

determine this reality. Devotedly and as if in obedience to the dictate of conscience they consecrate to this all-powerful and eternal Reality their ephemeral existence in order to give some value to their lives."

Page 114. Ruskin and Turner. One of the most effective passages in Ruskin's art criticism is the passage in which he defends the liberties which Turner took in a drawing which he made of the Pass of Faïdo. Ruskin's accurate etching and Turner's fanciful drawing of the same scene are reproduced in the illustrations which face page 214 of this book. Here is Ruskin's defence of the essential truthfulness of Turner's drawing (Modern Painters, vol. iv, chapter ii) :

"... the place is approached through one of the narrowest and most sublime ravines in the Alps, and after the traveller during the early part of the day has been familiarized with the aspect of the highest peaks of the Mont St. Gothard. Hence it speaks quite another language to him from that in which it would address itself to an unprepared spectator : the confused stones, which by themselves would be almost without any claim upon his thoughts, become exponents of the fury of the river by which he has journeyed all day long ; the defile beyond, not in itself narrow or terrible, is regarded nevertheless with awe, because it is imagined to resemble the gorge that has just been traversed above ; and, although no very elevated mountains immediately overhang it, the scene is felt to belong to, and arise in its essential characters out of, the strength of those mightier mountains in the unseen north. Any topographical delineation of the facts, therefore, must be wholly incapable of arousing in the mind of the beholder those sensations which would be caused by the facts themselves, seen in their natural relations to others. And the aim of the great inventive landscape painter must be to give the far higher and deeper truth of mental vision, rather than that of the physical facts, and to reach a representation which, though it may be totally useless to engineers or geographers, and, when tried by rule and measure, totally unlike the place, shall yet be capable of producing on the far-away beholder's mind precisely the impression which the reality would have produced, and putting his heart into the same state in which it would have been, had he verily descended into the valley from the gorges of Airole

. . . observe that the whole place is altered" (in Turner's drawing) "in scale, and brought up to the general majesty of the higher forms of the Alps. It will be seen that, in my topographical sketch, there are a few trees rooted in the rock on this side of the gallery, showing, by comparison, that it is not above four or five hundred feet high. These trees Turner cuts away, and gives the rock a height of about a thousand feet, so as to imply more power and danger in the avalanche coming down the couloir.

"Next he raises, in a still greater degree, all the mountains beyond, putting three or four ranges instead of one, but uniting them into a single massy bank at their base, which he makes overhang the valley. . . . The few trees, in the hollow of the glen, he feels to be contrary in spirit to the stones, and fells them, as he did the others ; so also he feels the bridge in the foreground, by its slenderness, to contradict the aspect of violence in the torrent ; he thinks the torrent and avalanches should have it all their own way hereabouts ; so he strikes down the nearer bridge, and restores the one farther off, where the force of the stream may be supposed less. Next, the bit of road on the right, above the bank, is not built on a wall, nor on arches high enough to give the idea of an Alpine road in general ; so he makes the arches taller, and the bank steeper, introducing, as we shall see presently, a reminiscence from the upper part of the pass.

"I say he 'thinks' this and 'introduces' that. But, strictly speaking, he does not think at all. If he thought, he would instantly go wrong ; it is only the clumsy and uninventive artist who thinks. All these changes come into his head involuntarily ; an entirely imperative dream, crying, 'Thus it must be,' has taken possession of him ; he can see, and do, no otherwise than as the dream directs.

"This is especially to be remembered with respect to the next incident—the introduction of figures. Most persons to whom I have shown this drawing, and who feel its general character, regret that there is any living thing in it ; they say it destroys the majesty of its desolation. But the dream said not so to Turner. The dream insisted particularly upon the great fact of its having come by road. The torrent was wild, the stones were wonderful ; but the most wonderful thing of all was how we ourselves, the dream and I, ever got here. By our feet we would

not—by the clouds we could not—by any ivory gates we could not—in no other way could we have come than by the coach road. One of the great elements of sensation, all the day long, has been that extraordinary road, and its goings on, and gettings about ; here, under avalanches of stones, and among insanities of torrents, and overhangings of precipices, much tormented and driven to all manner of makeshifts and coils to this side and the other, still the marvellous road persists in going on, and that so smoothly and safely, that it is not merely great diligences, going in a caravanish manner, with whole teams of horses, that can traverse it, but little postchaises with small postboys, and a pair of ponies. And the dream declared that the full essence and soul of the scene, and the consummation of all the wonderfulness of the torrents and Alps, lay in a postchaise, with small ponies and postboy, which accordingly it insisted upon Turner's inserting, whether he liked it or not, at the turn of the road."

CHAPTER VIII

Page 123. The Matterhorn and the Italians.

The Italian Alpine Club was founded in 1863, and its founders were undoubtedly inspired by national rivalry. The British had robbed them of Monte Viso, prince of the Piedmontese peaks, and they were determined that Italians should have the honour of conquering the Matterhorn, and conquering it from Italy by way of the Italian ridge. Carrel was a great Italian patriot, fired by the new Italian nationalism which inspired all those who, like Carrel, had fought in the Italian wars of liberation. "It was," writes Whymper, "the aim of his life to make the ascent from the side of Italy, for the honour of his native valley," but it would be a bold man who would assert, in a matter where we can only conjecture, that Carrel, who had fought for Italy and joined in the shouts of victory at Colle di Santiarno, was only inspired by valley patriotism.

It was, of course, a matter of indifference to Whymper whether he engaged a Swiss or an Italian guide, and he was as little affected as the English climbers of the period by nationalistic motives until his national pride was challenged, but the Italian conspiracy to rob him of the Matterhorn seems to have provoked his dormant nationalism, and John Bull emerges in the grim

satisfaction with which he records the Italian defeat. "It (Croze's blouse) made a poor flag . . . yet it was seen everywhere. . . . At Breuil the watchers cried, 'Victory is ours!' They raised 'bravos' for Carrel and 'vivas' for Italy" (and not only, be it observed, for the Val Tournanche, to which some critics would limit the patriotism of the Val Tournanche guides) "and hastened to put themselves en fête. On the morrow they were undeceived. 'All was changed; the explorer returned sad—cast down—disheartened—confounded—gloomy.'" John Bull emerges in the grim satisfaction with which Whymper records the Italian defeat ("there was no mistake about it this time. The Italians turned and fled").

CHAPTER IX

Page 134. Darwin. *Natural Selection*, Darwin argued, may be said to create a new species out of fortuitous variations as truly as man may be said to create a building out of the material provided by the stones of various shapes, but he offered no explanation of the origin of those "fortuitous variations" out of which the negative force of Natural Selection was alleged to create new species.

Page 141. Wills and the Wetterhorn. Claud Schuster who tells me that the doctrine that sporting mountaineering dates from Wills' ascent of the Wetterhorn was firmly established when he joined the club in 1894. Schuster attributes the myth to the influence of Wills' book *Wanderings Among the High Alps* (1856), but this was not even the first book on mountaineering in English, for Forbes and Albert Smith anticipated Wills, and Hudson and Kennedy's *Where's there's a Will there's a Way* (1856), appeared in the same year. The true pioneer of mountaineering literature was De Saussure, whose book *Voyages dans les Alpes* (1779) was sufficiently well known for Ruskin to choose it as a present on his fifteenth birthday. The doctrine that the British invented sporting mountaineering evolved as an unconscious compensation for the fact that we could not claim to have invented mountaineering, but our immense services in popularising the sport need no such fictitious embellishments.

Page 141. Sport. *The word is derived from an old French word desporter, which in turn is derived from a mediæval word disportare.*

The first man who hunted an animal for the pleasure of the hunt rather than to satisfy his hunger was a sportsman. "Athletic sports" are probably as old as man. Nobody could deny the immense contribution which the British have made to the development of sport, but we did not invent "sport." Sport is inevitably influenced by national characteristics, but the differences between the conceptions of sport in different countries are less important than the underlying unity. Our code of sportsmanship has its roots in the remote past and is derived through mediæval chivalry from the code which is summed up in the Greek word aidos. "In sport," writes Mr. Norman Gardner, "aidos is that scrupulous sense of honour and fairness which is supposed to be the essence of sportsmanship. It is 'aidos' which makes a man 'a straight fighter,' εὐθυμάκος, the epithet with which Pindar describes the boxer Diagoras." (Greek Athletic Sports and Festivals, p. 112.)

Page 145. The Eigerwand climb. *The first attempt on the Eigerwand was made by two young Munich climbers in 1935. They spent three nights on the mountain before the weather broke and died of exposure. In 1936 two Germans and two Austrians spent three nights on the mountain. They descended in a storm and reached a point just above the Eigerwand station of the Jungfrau railway. The rocky traverse leading to easy ground was iced, and the only hope was to "abseil" (rope down) to the easy ground just below the station. An employee of the Jungfrau railway heard the shouts of the party on Tuesday night and telephoned for a rescue party. They reached the station by special train and emerged from the tunnel about a hundred metres below where Toni Kurz was hanging on the rope. The "abseil" had failed. Kurz was the only survivor. Rainer was frozen to death, Hinterstoisser had fallen to his death, and Angerer had strangled himself in the attempt to rope down. It was already dark and the rescue party could do nothing but shout encouragement.*

Early next morning the guides reached a point about forty metres below Kurz. He had hung in a rope sling on the face of a cliff bombarded by falling stones and swept by rain-fed torrents.

And now Kurz began his last fight for life. He needed more rope, and his first task was to climb back to one of his dead companions, to cut the rope which bound him to the corpse and to attach this rope to the rope previously used for the "abseil." His hands were frozen, and the cliff was so smooth that he could find no secure stance while he carried through these intricate manœuvres. For six hours he forced mind and body to the limit of mental and physical endurance and then—at last—he was ready for the final effort. He lowered the two ropes, tied together, and the guides (Adolf Rubi, Hans Schlunegger and Arnold Glatthard) attached a forty-metre rope, and to this rope they tied pitons and a piton-hammer. Kurz used his last reserves of ebbing strength to drive the piton into the rock, and to complete the difficult preparations with the ropes. And then very slowly he began to lower himself. The guides below saw his feet appear over the overhang. Very slowly the feet crept nearer until they could all but touch the soles of his boots with their axes. And then suddenly all movement ceased. Kurz was dead. He had endured four nights on the mountains. He had watched his companions die. His valiant heart had resisted the terrors of storm and solitude and misery such as mountaineers have seldom been called on to endure. He had hung in his rope-sling, buffeted by the storm, but determined not to surrender. And he did not surrender. He died. In the annals of mountaineering there is no record of a more heroic endurance.

In 1937 two Italians were killed on the North Face, bringing the death roll up to eight.

On July 20th, 1938, two Austrians (Kasperek and Harrer) started for the North Face. On July 21st they were joined by two Germans (Heckmaier and Vorg), who had profited by the steps which the Austrians had cut on the previous day and overtaken them. The two parties joined forces. The Austrians spent four nights, the Germans three nights, on the mountains. One climber was struck by a falling stone which ripped all the skin off his hand. The combined parties were all but wrenched from their holds by snow slides which poured over them incessantly. Enfeebled by exposure and prolonged exertion, they battled their way to the summit through a blizzard. While the issue was still in doubt they heard the shouts of searchers who had climbed the Eiger by the ordinary route. They refused to

entertain the option of rescue. " 'Nicht antworten' ging es bei uns von Mund zu Mund " (" 'Don't answer,' we said to each other "). The Austrians had been on the mountain for four days, the Germans for three. The issue between life and death was still in grave doubt. Only those who have been very close to death can measure the stubborn courage of the men whose ambition forbade them to accept help in the last desperate phase of their climb.

The book *Um die Eiger Nordwand* ends with the words " Wir haben die Eiger-Nordwand durchklettert über den Gipfel hinaus bis zu unserm Führer ! " which may almost be rendered " Nearer my God to Thee," but more accurately, perhaps, " We have climbed the North face of the Eiger over the crest right up to our Leader." And the book ends with a picture of the Leader, annexing this triumph for the greater glory of his party, while four shy boys stand round, displaying four large photographs of the Leader in big frames. And underneath this picture you will find these words : Der Schönste Lohn (" The loveliest reward "). Bathos indeed after this record of superhuman achievement.

It is difficult to discover a rational and objective basis for judging climbs such as the ascent of the Eigerwand, but it is as illogical to allow our verdict on this climb to be influenced by our detestation of the Nazi creed as it would be to allow dislike of the political views of those who defended Stalingrad or the Alcazar to influence our admiration of their heroism. The Eigerwand climb may be rationally attacked on the ground that illegitimate risks were taken, but it is not easy to define the borderline which separates legitimate from illegitimate mountaineering risks. It is irrational to allow our condemnation of the climb, judged by the criterion of risk, to influence our verdict on the climb, judged by the criterion of difficulties successfully overcome.

The Eigerwand climb involved a considerable use of pitons, and on the question of pitons there is a considerable disagreement among British climbers, the younger climbers being in the main less censorious than their elders. The essence of mountaineering is the solution of problems, and now that every ridge or face which can be conquered without pitons has been climbed, it is inevitable that pitons will be used in order both to create and to solve problems insoluble without pitons. Whether we like it or

not the *piton* has come to stay. *Piton-technique* is a highly skilled craft, and *piton climbing* is a new sport just as *mountaineering without pitons* was once a new sport.

Again it does not seem to me reasonable to describe the *Eigerwand* as a "mere variation" of the North face. The north-easterly section of the North face, which *Lauper* climbed, is entirely distinct from the north-westerly *Eigerwand* which the Germans climbed. The west buttress is the easiest and safest and most direct route up the North face of *Lliwedd*, but nobody dismisses the east buttress as a "mere variation."

Finally the *Eigerwand* has been described as a climb "of no mountaineering value." I wonder how this particular critic would define "mountaineering value." Surely the criterion of mountaineering value is the degree to which mountaineering qualities are tested and it is arguable that no Alpine climb was more exacting test than the *Eigerwand* of the qualities which mountaineers esteem, courage, stamina, cragmanship and ice-craft. No just verdict on the *Eigerwand* is possible unless we are prepared to balance the case for the *Eigerwand* as the supreme test of mountaineering qualities against the objection to the climb on account of its unjustifiable risks.

There is no inconsistency in praising the courage and skill of the *Eigerwand* conquerors, while maintaining, for reasons given on page 145, that this type of climbing is a perversion of mountaineering. It would, however, be unjust to cite the *Eigerwand* climb as typical of German mountaineering between the wars. Many of the crack German climbers disapproved of this particular climb. It would be easy to cite German climbs on which no pitons were used and no illegitimate risks taken, and which were as meritorious as anything achieved in the Alps. The fact that we are at war with Germany must not influence our verdict on their mountaineering achievements.

I was passing the final proofs of this book for the press when I met Captain A. F. Marples, who has led many of the modern "Very severes" in the Lakes, and who made a sensational first ascent in the Bavarian Alps. He has climbed with many of the leading German cracks, and knows them intimately, and his judgment on their attitude to the Nazi regime and on their mountaineering philosophy is based on first-hand knowledge, which is more than can be said for some of those who express

themselves with great freedom on this subject. A letter from Captain Marples lies before me as I write. As the Nazi regime may not have fallen by the time this book is published, I can give no names nor cite any of the evidence which would help to identify Captain Marples' anti-Nazi German friends. I was present at a conversation at which Captain Marples maintained that the Munich rock climbers were better than the best in this country. A crack climber who was present disagreed. "Well," said Marples, "you know the Central Buttress on Scaufell. I've never heard of anybody leading it without a second man on the Flake crack, but 'A' [a famous German climber] led it in drizzle without any help from his second." "That's pretty conclusive," replied the other climber. "I came off on the Flake crack even with the help of my Number Two." "The majority of German climbers," writes Marples, "come from Munich. In my opinion they are better—far better—rock climbers than the British. Munich climbers have a great opportunity to practise rock-climbing on the Kletter Garten, a few miles from Munich, and situated near a road. They can climb in the evenings and they can practise when very young. 'Young and often' is the motto for good climbing and for all sports." Captain Marples points out that the German has far less opportunities for playing ball games than the British, whereas in Munich the Germans have every facility for climbing. In England the majority of climbers are recruited from the middle classes, whereas in Germany the climbers are recruited from the middle and working classes. "The greater muscular development of the manual worker gives him advantages when climbing." Captain Marples adds that if the facilities were reversed, "the English would be much better than the Germans."

Cæteris paribus those with the better opportunities will excel. It would be irrational to expect British climbers to be as good as the Germans, Austrians, Swiss or French as to expect us to produce world champions at ski-ing. The surprising fact about the British is the immense influence which they have exercised on the sports native to the Alps, and the extremely high standard, only just short of the highest standards, of their best performers. Captain Marples dissents from the view that the motive behind the German desperado climbs was the desire to "bring prestige to the Nazi party." "In my opinion," he wrote, "they climb

desperately as a form of escapism from Nazism. Most of them joined the Party only because they could not obtain employment otherwise." Captain Marples climbed with a young German who tried to obtain employment but in vain, for he had to reply in the negative to the question, "Are you a member of the Party?" At length he joined the Nazi party. "As he bitterly remarked to me: 'You can't have principles on an empty stomach'." Captain Marples then gives details of four climbers, all of whom were anti-Nazi. "They were superb and at times desperate climbers. Yet no reward came their way from the Party; my opinion is that in the mountains they found an escape from the Nazi way of living, a way of living which gave them little more than the bare necessities of life, while the Party Bosses enjoyed the luxuries. They were bitter about that." G. W. Young denies German superiority and cites the case of a crack Munich party who climbed one of the most severe climbs in Wales with the aid of pitons, whereupon a British party followed and removed the pitons.

Page 147. Guides and Amateurs. "Another effect of this historical accident," writes J. H. Doughty, "was to give to British climbing a certain social bias. The mere cost of Alpine travel precluded the many from its enjoyment, and mountaineering at first fell mainly into the hands of those possessed of at least moderate means and leisure. They were men, moreover, who, by the existing conventions of their class, were disposed to accept professional assistance in their sports with a rather poor-spirited complacency. The comedy of the Admirable Crichton has probably had many more performances at Lords and Zermatt than ever it achieved on the boards of a London theatre. The atmosphere of the high hills themselves is not exactly conducive to snobbery, but the spirit which was responsible for separating our cricketers into "Gentlemen" and "Players"—surely the most delightfully candid of all classifications—and shepherding them carefully into different and exclusive pens, could not be expected to find any incongruity in such practices as giving the titular honour of a new climb to the man who first led it if he was an English amateur, but to the man who paid him to do it if he happened to be a Swiss peasant" (Rucksack Club Journal, 1911). But the real leader of an expedition is not necessarily the man who is the leader on the rope.

"We are told by Mr. Smythe," writes Claud Schuster, "that we employed guides because we were snobs and regarded the carrying of weights as a menial office. This seems a very odd idea. Some of us climbed with guides because we were conscious of our own imperfections, and even of the imperfections of our travelling companions; some because we really wanted to get to the top and back again; some because we disliked carrying heavy weights, and probably all because we liked it" (*B.S.T.B.*, 1943, p. 106).

Claud Schuster has always been generous in his appreciation of all sound achievement (mountaineering and ski-ing) and consistently modest and unpretentious about his own mountaineering career.

Page 154. Kings and cockneys. The quotation continues: "They raise prices and destroy solitude, and make an Alpine valley pretty nearly as noisy and irritating to the nerves as St. James." Here, I think, Stephen is merely rationalising his antipathy to those at either end of the social scale. It was not because they raised prices that he objected to what he described as "that offensive variety of the genus of primates, the common tourist," or disliked the propinquity of kings. In May, 1900, King Edward VII (at that time Prince of Wales) was present at a dinner given to congratulate George Smith, the publisher, on the completion of *The Dictionary of National Biography*, of which Stephen was the Editor. Maitland, on page 455, in his "Life" of Stephen, reproduces a letter in which Stephen described the dinner. "My principle event this week has been the grand dinner with the Prince of Wales. Oh dear! What a bore it was . . . there were plenty of distinguished guests who softened the transition between us poor authors and Royalty. Well, I was dreadfully bored, but it has given me a chuckle or two."

Page 155. Mummery. "Partner with his brother in a tanning business at Dover and Canterbury" is how the *Alpine Club Register* describes Mummery. An old member of the club who joined it while Mummery was still alive tells me he was told at the time, but cannot guarantee the accuracy of the information, that Mummery had a retail boot shop at Dover, and that it was the prejudice against the retail trade that was responsible for his blackballing. My informant tells me that the overwhelming majority of the club were indignant about the blackballing. He added that there was nothing in Mummery's accent or manner to

which the most class-conscious member of the club could have taken exception.

Coolidge's claim to have faked the ballot when Mummery was elected is disputed by H. E. G. Tyndale, editor of *The Alpine Journal*. "Coolidge was not present at the Committee Meeting which preceded Mummery's election by four days, nor at the Annual Dinner which occurred on the day following the election." But nothing can be argued with certainty from Coolidge's non-appearance at dinners or committee meetings. During 1888 he was working up for one of his many quarrels with the committee, and preparing for his resignation of the editorship in 1889, and he may well have stayed away from dinners and committee meetings, and yet made a special effort to attend a general meeting in order to secure the election of a candidate whose blackballing had previously been engineered, so Coolidge believed, by one of Coolidge's enemies. On the other hand, I have been told by one who should know that it was not Coolidge but another member who faked the ballot. I shall never forget the joyous chuckles with which Coolidge described the incident and I, for one, am convinced that whether it was Coolidge himself who shifted the balls from the "No" to the "Aye" part of the box, he was privy to and responsible for the plot. His influence on Alpine history was, in general, so mischievous that I should be happy to believe that he saved the club from a grave scandal by an action which, under the circumstances, only the narrowest of legalists could condemn.

CHAPTER X

Page 165. Robertson, in his paper, *Alpine Humour*, contrasted the Alpine literature of his own day with Peaks, Passes and Glaciers, but the faults which he condemned in the contemporary literature could all have been exemplified from the literature of the pioneers. Mummery's "Alpine humour" was characteristic of the humour which Robertson criticised. The best Alpine writing of Edwardian and Georgian eras was not inferior to the best work of the pioneers.

Page 172. Gribble. The quotation is from an unsigned article in the *Field* which I quoted (without giving the date) in my book *The Alps* (1914). The internal evidence is conclusive as to authorship, and I suspect that Mr. Gribble was also the author of an

unsigned review of *Harold Spender's* anthology *In Praise of Switzerland* in *The Times*, in the course of which he remarked that "Mummery, perhaps, has individuality enough to be made welcome in any gallery, and, of course, one is glad to meet Leslie Stephen. But what is C. E. Mathews doing there? Or Norman Neruda? Or Mr. Frederic Harrison? In an anthology which professed to be nothing more than a collection of stories of adventure, accidents and narrow escapes, they would have had their place along with Owen Glynn Jones and Mr. Douglas Freshfield, and innumerable contributors to *Peaks, Passes and Glaciers* and *The Alpine Journal*."

CHAPTER XI

- Page 181. Colonel E. L. Strutt, ex-president of the Alpine Club, tells me that the Alpine Club tradition of not dressing for dinner did not apply to the *Kronenhof*, Pontresina, and that climbers usually took evening dress to the Engadine. Strong attempts were made to introduce evening dress at the Riffel Alp, but these were defeated by the old guard of the Alpine Club.
- Page 222. The Nazi influence on ski-ing. "I was revolted by the Nazi Press, by the blare of self-praise for the organisation, by the boastful headlines, by the exploitation of German successes for the greater glory of their disgusting Nazi creed. And so when I was asked, at the end of the slalom, to broadcast my comments, I could not bring myself to pay the compliments which were expected, but instead I addressed the microphone and the invisible audience in a speech which had at least one virtue, brevity: 'Germans, there are still some people who ski for fun.'"
(*Mountain Jubilee*, p. 160.)
- Page 222. Two tributes to the atmosphere of international amity which the British helped to create are worth quoting. The first is a translation of a passage from *Les Fils de la Neige* by Dieterlen, the most widely read of all the French writers on ski-ing. "Let us give thanks," he writes, "that there are still some men in our old anarchistic world who talk of tradition, and who, within the limits of this tradition, have the courage to make innovations and to progress, men who can organise a race without disorder and shouting, who can argue about sport without quarrelling, skiers who have proved that it is not necessary to be a brute in order to become a champion, or a gentleman covered with decorations in

order to preside over a club. Let us be grateful that the English, though cold and distant, are incapable of stabbing a man in the back, that they are neither servile nor flattering before the great, being themselves the great ones of the earth, that their presidents of clubs do not convey the impression that they are seeking a decoration, but none the less know how to impose their views and be sure that those views are understood; that they promise little and always keep their promises; that they value sport more than nationalism in sport; that they even continue to ski and to train for ski-ing when they are over sixty; that they never convey the impression that in organising a race or a club their real object is personal honour or satisfaction; that they seldom criticise but their judgment is worth having . . . and finally because every year they emerge from their museum to produce for the admiration of the world this magnificent sporting achievement, this diamond of ski races, the Kandahar."

That was written in 1935. To-day we are not the only skiers who look back with nostalgic regret on the golden age of downhill racing. In the 1943 issue of Der Schnee Hase, the Year Book of our old rivals and colleagues, the Swiss University Ski Club, Arnold Kaech who so often raced against us, pays a moving tribute to the international freemasonry of downhill racing, which even the shadow of war could not destroy. "Sometimes one hears tell of the time," writes Arnold Kaech, "when Otto Furrer was the King of St. Anton, when two Swiss, David Zogg and Fritz Steuri travelled with a German expedition to Greenland and shot polar bears. It sounds like a fairy tale that an Englishman, Arnold Lunn, could wander round in the Alps, sticking his slalom flags in other people's snow, that an Austrian, Guzzi Lantschner was as popular with us as a Swiss, Walter Prager in Kitzbühel, that Ernst Gertch of Wengen could set an Olympic slalom, that a Norwegian, Birger Ruud, worked in a sports shop in Garmisch, and in his spare time won not only gold medals for jumping and the Olympic downhill race, but also the hearts of the skiers of many lands.

"And how did it happen that Walter Amstutz and others persuaded Oestgaard, the white-haired President of the FIS, that downhill and slalom were also sports worthy of world championship status."

(Wie war es doch, als Walter Amstutz und andere . . .

Amongst the "andere" was a skier whom the Swiss used to call the Skipapst, but four years of war have had an erosive effect on that ski-ing tiara.)

"It was a great age," Kaech continues, "an Olympic age which came to an end shortly after the last Olympiad. The records of those days have been beaten, and the names of the winners have been forgotten. But we shall not forget Lunn's launige und philosophische speeches, nor his vain attempts during his speeches to brush the lapel of his coat. Nor shall we forget the Ski King Hannes Schneider when he came to Mürren for the Kandahar with his troop.

"We shall not forget all those who attempted to promote goodwill, and who tried in vain to resist the advent of the Iron Age.

"In those days life was a glorious and enchanting game.

"It was a spacious age, an age of open doors and friendship and laughter.

"The mountains still stand, and still the snow falls in the winter. And once again we shall see our good friends among us, and once again we too shall be able to travel beyond our frontiers. Yes, those days will return, and meanwhile it is for us to preserve the traditions of our sport."

REFERENCES

Though the references are compressed to save paper, the reader should have no difficulty in tracing a reference if he will note the following.

(1) To facilitate reference the only words italicised are those which mark the *beginning* of a reference, that is, *either* the name of the author, *or* the opening words of the quotation, *or* the title of the book. (2) Each italicised word, or words, marks the beginning of a new reference, excepting where several references are from the same book, in which case these are sometimes grouped together. With this exception references are given in the order of the text. (3) *Where the title of the book is given in the text or in an earlier reference* and where only one book by the same author is referred to, only the author's name is given in the reference. (4) A simple Arabic numeral is a page reference, e.g., *Engel*, 56, refers to page 56 of the book by Dr. Engel, the title of which is given in the text. (5) *Op. cit.* indicates that the title of the book has been given in an earlier chapter. (6) The reader will find it easy to decide whether, say, viii, 4, means (as in the *Iliad*) book viii, line 4, or, say, Psalm viii, verse 4, or, as is usually the case, volume viii, page 4. In the case of Ruskin, the references indicate volume, chapter and section, except in the case of the Library Edition (L.E.), where the references are to volume and page. (7) ABBREVIATIONS.—*Æn.*, *Æneid.* *A.J.*, *Alpine Journal.* *B.S.Y.B.*, *British Ski Year Book.* *Il.*, *Iliad.* *L.E.*, *Library Edition of Ruskin.* *M.P.*, *Modern Painters.* *Od.*, *Odyssey.* *P.E.*, *The Playground of Europe.* *P.R.*, *The Path to Rome.* *Præt.*, *Præterita.* *Ps.*, *Psalm.* *Q.B.*, *Quoted by.* *Q.M.*, *Quoted from memory.* *S.A.* *Scrambles amongst the Alps.*

No references are given for short poems or letters which can easily be traced in the collected works of the author, but in many cases the date of letters is given to facilitate reference. No page references are given for books such as Gibbon's Memoirs, of which several editions, with different pagination, have been published. In other cases the absence of a reference usually means that I had quoted the passage in an earlier work of mine without giving the reference or, in some cases, that my quotations are to illustrate views which I consider unsound or ill-considered from authors whose works I have, in spite of this, read with great enjoyment. In such cases the author's name is sometimes omitted.

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